

Empire-Advance

serving virden & area since 1885

JUNE 5, 2026 | EMPIRE: VOL 121 NO 42 / ADVANCE: VOL 140 NO 44 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS

GAME NIGHT
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sunrisecu.mb.ca

Fireside Follies Brought Memories Alive



Theatrick Players pose after a night of laughter

PHOTO BY JILL RADWANSKI

By Nancy Jo Moller
EMPIRE ADVANCE

The Virden Legion Hall was filled with laughter Friday May 29 when the 'Fireside Follies' visited town. Chairs filled as nearly 200 people packed the hall to enjoy a night of chuckles during the recent fundraising for the Wallace District Fire Department. This was the first of two nights of this fundraiser. 'Fireside Follies' presented by the Theatrick Players was based on Carol Burnett skits. This theatre group has purchased the rights to stage some of the skits shown on television between 1970 and 1990.

Local firefighters, members of the 'Bucket Brigade' were auctioned off to lucky audience tables. They arrived at the winning table with their 'buckets' overflowing with tasty snacks to be enjoyed during the evening. Apprehensive about the auction process, one member had asked, "exactly what duties do I have to perform at the table?" Imagination was running wild for this frisky firefighter. One was heard to ask, "what would happen if no one

bid on him". The price put on his 'service', amazed him. Every 'Brigade' member was quickly snapped up with the direction to care for their table. They delivered drinks and food to their 'buyers', providing pampering rarely seen at a social event.

The lights dimmed and the action began, the stage and hall were decorated in the '70's theme' and the crowd embraced the scene with numerous ticket holders had flashbacks to their earlier years.

There were three segments to the evening show with numerous different scenes and characters in each. A six-foot-tall Girl Scout with a hint of beard appeared frequently to the audiences' laughter. For those of us raised watching Carol Burnett, the characters were familiar and we watched with anticipation how the night would play out. The younger members got a taste on how family friendly comedy could be entertaining.

At the first intermission, those audience members who had signed up for pizza gobbled their slices (from



Hey Honey, do you want to fool around? Feeling frisky on a Friday night in Virden.



PHOTOS BY NANCY JO MOLLER

70s Fashion came alive. Did we really look like that?

Boston Pizza) with enjoyment. Other audience members munched on their popcorn bowls kept filled by Mayor Tina and crew.

The actors appeared to be thoroughly enjoying their roles, with laughter escaping instead of their lines, reminiscent of the actual Carol Burnett shows. Audience members embraced the chance to wear their '70s' clothing again, sporting flashy flowered shirts, gold necklaces and bell bottoms.

The crowd left in laughter after a successful fundraising night for an important community organization.

Inside...



VCI BAND FESTIVAL

P3



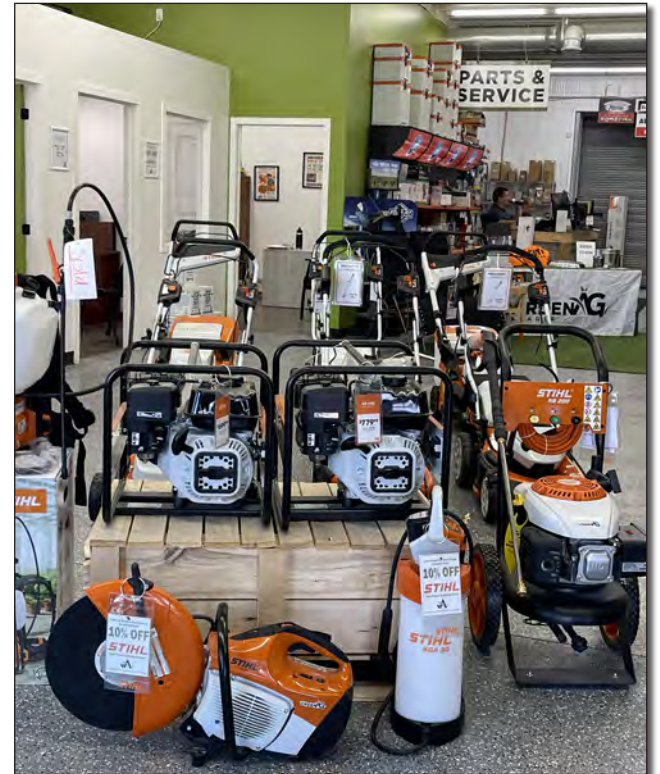
OFF TO THE RACES

P9

Virден Ag & Parts open house event



Kiotti and Cub Cadet riding mowers lined up and ready for a test drive.



PHOTOS BY JESSICA COULTER

By Jessica Coulter
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virден Ag & Parts hosted an open house on May 28. Originally the open house was scheduled to be on May 14, but due to an unforeseen power outage, the team postponed the event for two weeks. This did not stop the visitors from making the change and attending on the new available date. Quite a few visitors came to check out all that Virден Ag & Parts had to offer. "Overall, I'd say it was pretty successful!" says Lynette Grumpelt, Office Manager.

This can be a tough season to plan an event with everyone coming out of winter and getting back outside but it didn't stop Virден Ag & Parts from having a great turnout

and with Los Brothers selling delicious smash burgers on site every person was able to leave happy and full.

A large focus of the event was the lawn and garden brands they carry instead of the ag brands, although everyone was welcome to come in to talk to the experts about both. The lawn and garden brands were carrying some great deals for customers to take advantage of. They often refer to STIHL and Cub Cadet as their "every man" brands as there's usually something for everyone in the lineup.

If you missed the open house all are still welcome to come visit the staff at Virден Ag & Parts. When you get a chance to visit be sure to say hello to Nitro, the Official

Stihl tools are the 'every man' brand, there is something for everyone.

Greeter and Goodest Boy. The sales team, Matt Hipwell, owner, or Trevis Hunter and Guy Pounder, sales consultants, are all ready to help you find the right item for you. If you are in need of some parts or service, be sure to have a chat with the parts and service team, Reid Lanouette, Kim Rowan, Wayne McKenzie, Oleksandr Vereskun and Malcolm Finlay. Also, never to be forgotten, the team behind the scenes, the office staff, Lynette Grumpelt, Shelby Swanson and Teresa Janzen.

Downtown Road Work



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WADDELL

One patch at a time makes a smoother future on Nelson Street. Virден crews were hard at work on Thursday, May 28 fixing the streets in town. The work was scheduled for May 27, but was rescheduled due to rain. The streets repaired were Raglan Street West, Nelson Street West and Wellington Street West between 6th and 8th Avenues on May 28. Princess Street West was repaired on May 27.



RETIREMENT AUCTION FOR BOB & WENDY MARTENS

Rivers, MB

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More restored tractors, shop tools, recreation and JD memorabilia

This sale is live in person w/internet bidding.
Go to TAYLOR.CANBID.COM to view and register or for info call Brock at 204 522-6396 or Bob at 204 724-8896

Band students receive festival awards



Violinist Kennedy Routledge (Gr. 9), receives several honours from Virde n Music & Arts Festival and is congratulated by band teacher Ms. Zander.



Bass Clarinetist Nicholas Sharp (Gr. 10) receives the Sunrise Credit Union Award of Merit.

PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

At Virde n Collegiate Institute Band Concert – “Last Chapter” held May 29 in the AUD Theatre, Judy Poole, Chairperson for Virde n Music & Arts Festival congratulated the band and presented several awards for performances at Virde n festival.

Kennidy Routledge is a violinist in Gr. 9. She received the Town of Virde n Award for highest mark for her performance in the Instrumental Solo class, the Tundra Oil & Gas Scholarship and a recommendation to perform at the Provincial competition in Winnipeg on the May 30th weekend, which she planned to attend.

Another VCI Band member, bass clarinetist Nicholas Sharp (Gr. 10) received the Sunrise Credit Union Award of Merit.

VCI Gr. 9-12 Band conducted by Ms. Tyra Zander was awarded the Fort La Bosse School Division Shield for highest mark.

Also at the concert, Ms. Zander wished graduating student Ethan Lao the best in his future endeavors. As a burgeoning composer, Lao featured in some of the concert music and he took part in conducting the band.

The concert performances were stirring with a number of instrumentalists featured throughout the Friday evening program.

Afterwards, Poole said, “VCI Band concert was outstanding and to have their very own composer among the band members is impressive.” She added, “We have a great band instructor and talented band members.”

High school band celebrates year of music, highlights graduate



SUBMITTED PHOTO

VCI Gr. 9-12 Band with Band Conductor Ms. Tyra Zander (L) and Gr. 12 student Ethan Lao (R) holding Fort La Bosse School Division Shield the band was awarded by Virde n Music & Arts Festival for the highest Mark.

Touring the division

The band’s success this year extended well beyond the concert stage. Students participated in festivals and embarked on a “Tour of the Fort La Bosse School Division,” performing for students at Mary Montgomery School, Goulter School, Virde n Junior High School, Elkhorn School, and Kola School. The band hopes to expand the tour to additional schools next year.

These performances provide students with much more than musical experience. They foster teamwork, build meaningful relationships, teach students how to work together toward a common goal, and give them opportunities to share their passion for music with others throughout the community.

Community support

Community support continues to play a vital role in the success of the band program. Fundraising remains essential in providing students with opportunities to perform, travel, and access quality musical equipment and resources.

In order to thrive and do what we do, the support of the community through fundraising is a necessity. We are grateful for the continued support we receive from the community, families of the band members, school division, and for the amazing staff and admin at VCI.

Keep an eye out for new fundraising opportunities that will come in the next school year. Information will continue to be shared including fundraising goals, projects, and available products that you can purchase.

As another successful year comes to an end, the future of the band program remains bright. With strong student leadership, community support, and a shared passion for music, the ensemble looks forward to the opportunities and accomplishments that next school year will bring.

By Ms. Tyra Zander

MUSIC AND BAND INSTRUCTOR FOR VCI AND VJH

Virde n Collegiate Institute Band brought another successful year to a close with its final concert Friday, May 29 in Virde n AUD Theatre, showcasing a diverse program reflecting the hard work and dedication of the students from Gr. 9-12. The evening featured concert band selections, television theme music, pieces inspired by true stories, student favorites, and Jazz repertoire that had previously been performed at both Virde n Music & Arts Festival and Brandon University Jazz Festival in March.

One of the highlights of the evening was the premiere of original music composed and arranged by graduating Gr. 12 student Ethan Lao. Taking on a challenge few high school students attempt; Ethan wrote and arranged two pieces for the full ensemble as well as a Clarinet Choir work featuring the VCI Band Clarinet section. With only a few months to prepare, the band embraced the challenge and worked diligently to bring Ethan’s musical vision to life.

Ethan Lao

Ethan’s dedication to the VCI Band program has been truly exceptional. His fellow band members would agree that he has made a lasting impact on the ensemble that will inspire others for years to come. Among his many musical accomplishments are participation in the West-

man Honor Band and attendance at Brandon University Clarinet Festival for the past two years.

Through these experiences, he’s had the opportunity to work alongside professional musicians while expanding his musical knowledge and appreciation. Ethan’s leadership, musicianship, and willingness to mentor younger students have helped shape the culture of the program and will leave a lasting legacy for future generations of the VCI band members.

As Ethan graduates, he leaves behind a tradition of leadership that has been passed from one graduating band member to the next. His example will continue to inspire the younger musicians and clarinet players who will join the VCI Band in the coming years.

Greg NESBITT
MLA for Riding Mountain

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Toll Free 844.877.7767
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Burlington Place, Shoal Lake, MB

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Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



Last tag, you're it...

This past week I had the privilege of joining a granddaughter and her family for supper. Of course we ate out! And I could certainly recommend the Busy Bee in Boissevain. As we were quietly eating, my seven year old subtly touched my arm and said - tag, you're it. Never blinking an eye, I waited a moment and just as subtly touched her arm and said- last tag, you're it, fingers crossed! She knew then that I knew what game she was playing. However, her mother was really surprised. 'How do you know that? I thought that was something the kids made up on the playground!' and that's when I knew I had failed as a grandparent!

One of my very favourite aunts, Aunt Tillie, always played last tag. From early in my childhood, she would wait until we were in the car, ask to have the window rolled down for a last good-bye, and then lean in and say those words - last tag, you're it, fingers crossed?. She played that with us, on us, until she was mobile only with a wheel chair.

For those of you unfamiliar with the game, you cannot be tagged back as long as you have your fingers crossed. That's your immunity! So one watches carefully for a moment when you can catch the other player. With me eating sweet potato fries and a tasty burger, it did not take my great grand to catch me back. And the game was on! Side note—you can not pry another's fingers uncrossed! Good fun, even in a public space. And I played an Aunt Tillie, as we were all leaving, and she was getting in their vehicle, I tapped her arm and last tagged her, for a final time. Making me a winner!

This pleasant interaction gave me food for thought on the two hour drive home. I drifted between the games I played, and with whom I played them. In the early school years we played anti, anti, I over, over the horse barn at the back of the school yard -and I am so old that in winter the van was hauled by horses that needed to be stabled indoors for the day. We played red rover, red rover, I call (opponents name inserted here) over. The linked arms that were the winners ribbon needed to be broken by a faster than a speeding bullet runner, or the capture was complete and you had been conscripted on to their team. Dodge ball was often unkind! Some of my classmates not only had the strength of a farm kid but pretty darn good aim as well!

Somewhere along the way I learned how to play badminton. Not in an arena or gymnasium, but in the great outdoors where wind was certainly a factor, as were trees and eavestroughs! Played it with my sisters, with my grands, and even with my greatgrands. Hide and go seek in the dark was the best community gathering game! Perhaps there was more fun in hiding in the dark with a friend than in the being found.

Needless to say the miles and time slid by.

Attention Wab and Obby

This is an open letter to Premier Wab Kinew, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Manitoba and Obby Khan, Official Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba.

Gentlemen,

I would like to ask you to consider meeting with me, the two of you together in the same room at the same time.

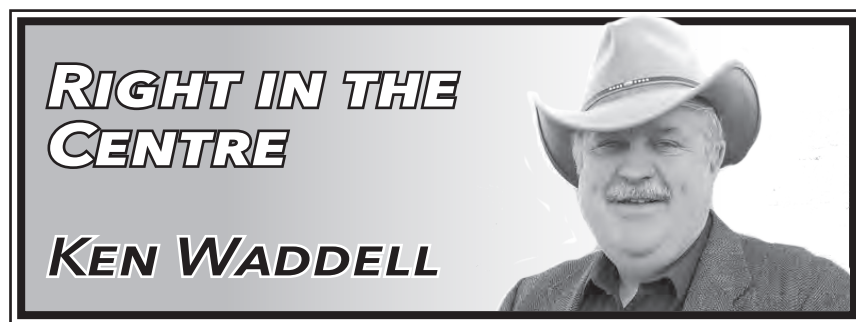
Let me explain please.

I am 78 years old and have seen a lot of Manitoba politics. I don't mean to sound like I am bragging and I by no means intend to imply that I am smarter than either of you. But, I do have 30 years more experience than either of you. I have two sons that are ten years older than you two men are. So, with that in mind, please hear me out.

I have known every Manitoba premier since Douglas Campbell. I have known some of them very well. I have observed Manitoba politics very closely and you may remember, but you can certainly be excused if you don't, that I tried to get elected a couple of times as an MLA and MP. I even ran for the leadership of PC Manitoba back in 2006. I have been in the newspaper business, albeit not continuously since 1968, but continuously since 1989 and have seen and heard a lot. Now I know all that and \$3 will buy you a cup of coffee but my age, experience and observations I think may be helpful to you both.

I offer these observations and ideas for the good of you both and for Manitoba.

As I indicated, I have closely observed and followed Manitoba politics since the the mid 1950s. I remember the building of the Floodway, the Portage Diversion, BiPole III, the



You are both falling very short in terms of your behaviour in The House

introduction of Autopac and numerous leadership conventions for both the NDP and PC parties.

I have witnessed many legislative sessions, some in person, some by way of TV and other news media coverage. The debates have been intense and prolonged. I have been to several committee meetings as a witness and an observer.

Here's the deal. You gentlemen are young, fairly photogenic, fairly good communicators and are gaining some strengths in terms of policy.

However, you are both falling very short in terms of your behaviour in The House. You are both descending into the dark pit of cheap shots, insults, half truths and general nastiness. It's not the way things should be. Pouring out and drawing out nastiness is not doing either of you any good, not helping our legislature or the people of Manitoba.

I know I may sound pretentious but I do want to meet with both of you and at the same time. You need to both shape up and as an experienced journalist, former mayor, a father, grandfather and great grandfather, I feel it's time you two men had a fireside chat with an older person who has seen a lot of life's experiences, some of which you have not had.

I await your reply and would be happy to travel to Winnipeg to meet with you both.

For the good of Manitoba, I am yours sincerely,
Ken Waddell,
Publisher and Owner

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this column are the writer's personal views and are not to be taken as being the view of the Neepawa Banner & Press, Rivers Banner and Virden Empire Advance staff.

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Miniota News

Submitted

BY LINDA CLARK

Kevin and Kay Lelond attended the convocation of their granddaughter, Emma Gertz, daughter of Nancy and Richard, at Brandon University on May 28. Emma graduated with a Bachelor of Education and has secured her first teaching position at Elkhorn Collegiate. Congratulations, Emma!

As well, Trudy Watters attended the Brandon University convocation to be part of the celebration of her granddaughter, Raegan Miller, Lori's daughter, who also graduated with a Bachelor of Education. Congratulations, Raegan!

Linda Clark attended the Prairie to Pine United Church

Conference in Selkirk this past weekend and visited with Kevin and Julie Halipchuk and family at West St. Paul. She also managed to squeeze in granddaughter Reese's softball game and cheered on granddaughter Carley in the U14 Provincial Basketball Playoffs. A proud grandma reports that Carley and her team took home the gold medal.

Ron and Vicki Bryant, along with their family, attended the wedding of their granddaughter, Tori Simard, daughter of Danny and Josie, to Jaxon Heeny at Oakland Estates south of Brandon on May 30. Congratulations to Tori and Jaxon!

Susan Bryant and all her family were home to join in the wedding celebrations. To add to the excitement of the weekend for Ron and Vicki, they also welcomed a new great-grandson, Sonny Richard Brent, born to Taryn and Grady Delmaire and big brother Levi on May 31. Sonny is a second grandson for Cindy and Brent Soder.

Congratulations to all!

Proud grandparents John and Noreen Stowe and Wayne and Dorothy Brown, along with other family members, celebrated the marriage of Abby Stowe and Andryn King on May 30 in Rocanville. Abby is the daughter of Erin and the late David Stowe. Congratulations, Abby and Andryn!

Isabella News

Hazel Wall accompanied Kelvin and Becki Wall and other family members to Melita on Sunday to attend the musical Dare to Dream. Granddaughter Georgia McConnell was a member of the cast.

The family enjoyed spending time together, followed by supper at the home of Eric and Kaleigh McConnell.

From the Daily Dose of Happiness: "Life is strange. You arrive with nothing, spend your whole life chasing everything, and still leave with nothing. Make sure your soul gains more than your hands."

Town Office: 204-748-2440

Virден 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

Virден Spray Park

Open daily from 10:00-8:00

For maintenance, please call:

- 204-908-1210 – weekdays until 5:00 PM
- 204-851-2870 – evenings and weekends

Upcoming Council Meetings

June 18

Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

Summer Day Camp registration open

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

Tax Prepayment Discounts

The Town of Virден 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
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.

Public Notice

Property Reassessment 2027 Open House

June 10, 2026 10:00 AM- 2:00 PM

Location: Wallace-Woodworth Municipal Office (The Corner of Hwy 83 and 257)

An assessor will be available to meet with ratepayers who may have questions regarding their assessment.

For more information regarding assessments please visit www.gov.mb.ca/assessment

If you have any questions, please call your local Assessor at 1-866-262-9854

Employment Opportunity

Manager of Utilities

The Town of Virден 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 Virден website.

Please forward resume with cover letter to:

Neil Smith, Chief Administrative Officer
Town of Virден
Box 310, Virден, MB, R0M 2C0
Email: cao@virден.ca

Notice of Registration of Prospective Candidate for General Municipal Elections

Town of Virден

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 Virден office, 236 Wellington Street West, Virден, 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 Virден office.

Rhonda Stewart, SEO
Phone: 204-851-0769

Email: rlstewart64@outlook.com

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

HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

This week's recipes come from the Anglican afternoon A.C.W. It has no date anywhere in it. It has to be after 1974 as the Economy Department Store Ltd ad has 1974 as its incorporation date. Advertisers were businesses such as Clark's Bakery; Dentist, DR. D. G. Dawson; Pic-a-pop owned by Bill and Betty Heal; Hoaths Grocery where they were pleased to serve you; Streeter Power Sale and Service; Peter McCaffery Realty and we were to thank heaven for the 7 Eleven Store.

From the Neepawa Land of Plenty history Book, "No history of Saint James would be complete without a mention of its internationally famous sign that reads, "Drive carefully, you may hit an Anglican." This was erected in 1954 after a reckless motorist ran over the previous sign. The humorous twist in the situation is the work of Reverend John Patrick."

Foxy franks

Mrs. Jean Birch

1 cup apricot preserves	1/2 cup tomato sauce
1/3 cup vinegar	2 Tbsp. soya sauce
2 Tbsp. honey	1 Tbsp. salad oil
1 tsp. salt	1/4 tsp. ginger
1 lb. frankfurters	

In a skillet combine the first 8 ingredients. Cut franks in one inch pieces and add to the sauce. Cover and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes.

Potluck scalloped potatoes

Mrs. K. Huband

1 can cubed luncheon meat, or cubed ham, beef, pork or chicken	
4 cups sliced potatoes or more or less according to the size of the family	
1 tin celery soup	1/2 cup chopped onion
2 Tbsp. diced green and red pepper	1 cup breadcrumbs
2 Tbsp. melted butter	

Heat oven to 350°F. Mix together meat, onion, soup, and peppers. Layer potatoes alternately with soup mixture. Bake 1 1/2 hours; remove lid and sprinkle over breadcrumbs that have been tossed with butter. Bake 15 minutes longer with lid off. Try other cream soups to make different tasting casseroles.

Cheese souffle

Vi Davidson

4 tsp. butter	4 tsp. flour
1 cup milk	1 cup grated cheese
1 tsp. salt	4 eggs

Separate eggs. Melt the butter and blend in the flour, gradually add milk. Stir until mixture thickens. Combine with grated cheese and salt. Beat egg whites until they stand in peaks. Beat egg yolks well and add to the cheese mixture. Carefully fold into beaten egg whites. Turn into a well-buttered casserole and bake at 350°F 45 minutes.

Brides' pastry

Olive Wiseman

1/2 lb. shortening or lard	1/4 cup margarine
3 cups flour	1 tsp. salt
1/2 cup cold water	

Have shortening and margarine at room temperature: cream together thoroughly. Add flour and salt; mix well together. Add cold water. Dough will be a little sticky. Refrigerate a few minutes before using. May be kept in refrigerator or in freezer until required. This recipe never fails.

Peppermint cake

Marion Lockhart

Part 1:	
2 eggs beaten	1/2 cup margarine melted
1 cup sugar	2 squares unsweetened chocolate
1/2 tsp. peppermint flavoring	1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup walnuts	
Part 2:	
2 Tbsp. margarine	1 Tbsp. cream
1 cup icing sugar	1/2 tsp. peppermint
Part 3:	
2 squares semi-sweet chocolate	1 Tbsp. margarine

Bake part 1 for 25-30 minutes at 350°F; cool. Combine part 2. Spread this on part 1. And let set. Combine part 3 and spread on top of cake.

Pineapple brownies

Mrs. A.C. Benson

1/2 cup soft shortening	1 cup white sugar
2 eggs, well beaten	1 cup crushed pineapple
1 tsp. vanilla	1 cup flour
1/2 cup cocoa	1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda	1/2 tsp. salt
3/4 cup chopped walnuts	

Mix shortening, sugar and eggs; blend well. Add pineapple and vanilla. Mix cocoa, baking powder, soda and salt well with the flour. Add to the other ingredients. Add the nuts. Bake in a 9X9 inch pan about 30 minutes at 375°F. Ice with pineapple icing: 1 1/2 cup icing sugar, 3 Tbsp. soft butter and enough pineapple juice to make easy to spread.

Viriden RCMP make arrest after assault in Sioux Valley First Nation

Submitted

RCMP MEDIA RELATIONS

On May

28, 2026,

at approximately 12:30 am, Viriden RCMP were dispatched to a report of an assault that had occurred at a residence in Sioux Valley First Nation.

While en route, officers received an update that the suspect had returned and was assaulting another member of the residence. Upon arrival, Sioux Valley First Nation Safety Officers had the male suspect detained in their vehicle.

Further investigation revealed the suspect had attempted to choke an adult female outside the residence and then left – only to return a short time later. The suspect then tried to gain entry through a locked front door and when he couldn't – came in

through a window.

While inside he assaulted an adult male and caused considerable damage inside the residence.

A 21-year-old male from Sioux Valley First Nation was arrested and faces the following charges:

- Assault while choking;
- Assault;
- Fail to comply probation order;
- Uttering threats against a person;
- Mischief under \$5,000 – damage to property

He has been remanded into custody until his court appearance. The suspect and victims are known to each other.

Viriden RCMP continue to investigate.

For further information, contact:

Manitoba RCMP Media Relations Unit

Phone: 204-983-8497

Police Report

Westman RCMP Service Report for May 24 to 30

Submitted

BY WESTMAN RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 109 calls for service. Some of these calls for service include 57 traffic offences, 1 False Alarms, 3 Assaults, 1 Wellbeing Checks, 1 Mental Health, 8 - 911 Calls, 3 Fire Prevention, 3 Utter Threats and 3 Operation while Impaired.

On May 26, during a routine traffic patrol on Highway 257 in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed the driving speed of 132 km/hr in a 100 km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$469.

On May 26, RCMP received a call for an Impaired Driver who had attended the business area in Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. Witnesses advised the driver of the vehicle was intoxicated by alcohol. RCMP attended and located the driver who showed impaired signs. ASD samples were completed to which the driver blew FAIL and was subsequently arrested for Impaired Operation. The driver of the vehicle was transported to Viriden detachment where two separate breath samples were obtained which resulted in 190mg% and 170mg%. The driver was charged with Impaired Operation, Impaired Operation exceeded 80mg%. The driver was also issued Traffic Offence Notice for Driver Without Holding a Valid Driver's License and Drive a Motor Vehicle Contrary to Requirements of Ignition Interlock. Once sober, the driver was released with conditions to appear in court later.

On May 27, during a routine patrol in the Town of Viriden, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed the driving speed of 85km/hr in a 50km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$508.

On May 29, during a routine patrol in the RM of Sifton, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed the driving speed of 137km/hr in a 100km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$535.

On May 30, RCMP received a call from a complainant who requested a wellbeing check on her partner in the RM of Pipestone. Members attended the residence and spoke with the complainant and further learnt that the complainant and her partner had a verbal argument which escalated to physical where they had both assaulted each other prior to police arrival. Both parties were charged with one count of Assault and were released on conditions to appear in court later.

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

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

Music in the Park returns to Kenton Bandstand



PHOTO BY JESSICA COULTER

The stage is set and ready for another great show. Photo from Canada Day 2025.

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Kenton Community Enterprises would like to invite you to our bandstand events in Kenton this summer. Bookings are ongoing so please follow the town of Kenton Facebook page for updates.

Kenton Community Enterprises are looking for music artists wanting to play at the bandstand, as well as anyone looking for a gig to play. Events run for about an hour so bring your lawn chair and enjoy the music.

Donations will be accepted at the bandstand to cover costs for the entertainers. The hope is to have a music performance weekly so watch for updates, posts and follow on Facebook.

On Canada Day there will be a full day of events which I will be sharing when more info is forthcoming. The events of course are weather dependent so stay tuned for updates!

OLD SAYINGS

REF TO
WRITER

GERRY
NOLAN



Another old saying is spill the beans, which simply means letting a secret slip!

A stitch in time saves nine. This is the idea of fixing something now saves you from having a larger problem later. It is a timeless reminder that a little effort today will prevent a whole lot of trouble tomorrow.

Mind your Ps and Qs. It is a reminder to mind your own business and mind your manners. It refers to watching what you say in public and how you behave.

Here is one we hear a lot still today, Over the Moon. Means they are absolutely thrilled and bursting with happiness.

Riding Shotgun. This is synonymous with sitting on the passenger side of a vehicle. This saying goes all the way back to the stagecoach days when someone rode next to the driver with a shotgun in his hands for protection from outlaws.

Yogi Berra of the New York Yankees who won more World Series Championships than any other player, always seemed to have great one liners or sayings as well. One of my favourites is when Yogi says, when you come to a fork in the road, take it! You can figure that one out on your own.

Last one, Cart before the horse suggests something is done contrary to the natural sequence of events. The beginning suggests doing things the wrong way around. This phrase was first derived from the 16th century! And that is a wrap for this week!

Oak Lake community provides outlet for fresh starts

By Nancy Jo Moller
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Oak Lake community celebrated the first anniversary of their Thrift and Thrive. It is located, in a former church group building, at 272 Oxcart Trail, Oak Lake, MB. The Oak Lake Regional Community Development Board had discussed what type of business was needed in town and whether a thrift store was a logical decision at an Annual General Meeting. This community-driven thrift store not only provides affordable goods to residents but also reinvests profits into local groups and organizations, strengthening and enriching the social, cultural and economic fabric of the community. Their first donation was to the local food cupboard, and they continue to share their profits in the community since then.

The store is staffed with one employee and a dedicated group of volunteers who receive

donated items, evaluate their condition and then sort, clean and display them. The store has something for everyone including clothing, shoes, toys, household items and a puzzle table if you want to visit and not shop. It is the type of store where you can spend an hour whether visiting or shopping and head home in a happier state of mind.



PHOTOS BY NANCY JO MOLLER

One year of continued success sees store thriving.



Pick me and walk away with happier soles.



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

Community rallies for Oak Lake school playground

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Tim Horton's Westman Smile Cookies featured teamwork to make it a week

of giving, sharing, and community spirit that resulted in a whopping \$27,667.99 for Oak Lake Community School playground equipment project.

The "Playground of Possibilities" project has already received significant financial support, including a donation of nearly \$47,000 from Tundra Oil and Gas, a \$15,000 grant from the Oak Lake and Area Foundation, and \$1,500 from the Oak Lake Lions Club. Additional fundraising efforts by the school's Parent Council, including a raffle that raised \$5,000, Smile Cookie sales, hot dog days and bake sales, have helped move the project forward.

"Our Parent Council has been amazing because they're part of this whole fundraising," said Principal Brenda Masson. "The kids have been working for this."

Grade 8 student Noah Wohlgemuth said students played a direct role in choosing the playground additions. The centrepiece of Phase 1 is a Cyclo-Cone climber, a large spinning spiderweb-style structure designed for older students.

"We wanted to get it because on our older kids' side, it's pretty barren," said Wohlgemuth. "It's just an open field, a couple of soccer nets, and no one really wants to go outside and actually do anything at break because it's boring."

The project also includes new basketball hoops for younger students.

"A lot of them do want to come over and play, but they're too little for that side," Wohlgemuth explained.

Masson said the current project is only the first phase of a larger vision. The school is applying for additional provincial funding that could allow further expansion of the playground.

"This is our Phase 1 and we'll just expand this into adding some extra pieces onto the climber," she said. "We're hoping to get a grant application in and be successful with the next phase."



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Tim Hortons (Westman) owners Rhonda Pardy and Greg Crisanti along with staff Jily Bowser (L) and Tanner Bell (back r), present Oak Lake Community School students and staff with the Smile Cookie campaign cheque for \$26,667.99: (rear L-R) Student Council reps Noah Wohlgemuth, Landon Schoonbaert, Julianna Klassen, Principal Mrs. Brenda Masson, Mrs. Beth Norrie Grade 4/5 teacher; (front l-r) Alexander Branum, Meredith Masson, Emmy Stannage, Ella Wiens, Lauren Thiessen, Kody Decroliere.

The school's successful Smile Cookie campaign became a major community effort. Students dressed up as cookies and the school's Raptor mascot, worked at the Tim Hortons drive-thru, created promotional posters, delivered cookies and canvassed local businesses for orders.

"We had every classroom involved in some way," Mrs. Masson said. "The whole community of Oak Lake and all of their businesses got behind it."

The playground's importance goes beyond school hours.

"We are the community playground," Masson said. "There isn't another playground in the community, so after school, weekends, summer, our daycare uses our playground. We're the hub of the community."

The Smile Cookie campaign ranked among the top

five fundraisers in Manitoba, a result Masson said reflects the area's strong community spirit.

"We applied for the Tim Hortons Smile Cookie (campaign) and we were a little nervous. We're just a small community. How will this work? We don't have a lot of local businesses, but they all did support."

And then I think it was just so exciting to see the whole community of Virden and all of their businesses get behind it, the schools, RCMP... it was just a whole effort."

The Oil Capitals (hockey team) even joined in to help put smiles on the cookies.

"It wasn't just an Oak Lake thing. It really brought the whole community and outside area together in a positive way," said Mrs. Masson. "Sharing smiles."

Oak Lake Ambulance marks 50 years of service



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Former and present ambulance providers attend the 50-year celebration: (Back l-r): Rachele Wiens, Cal Sigurdson, Charlie Abbott, Leigh Hutchinson, Roberta Hutchinson, Mike Wiens, Wade Harvey, Morgan Podobni; (Front l-r): Kerry Smith, Kathy Wiens, Mano Wiens, Nancy Buckley, Maureen Senff, Judy Podobni.

Submitted
BY NANCY BUCKLEY

Over 60 people gathered together to celebrate 50 years of ambulance service in Oak Lake on Sunday, May 31, at the Oak Lake Legion Hall. It was a mini reunion of sorts as, in addition to the many local people attending, people travelled from Winnipeg, Deloraine, Melita, Virden and Brandon to attend, renew friendships and share stories of some of their experiences on ambulance runs.

Callum Melvin, Regional EMS Manager; Kristy Fisher, District 3 Manager; paramedics from Virden and Rivers Ambulance; a paramedic from Brandon; and a Clinical Service Leader were also in attendance. It was nice to have the show of support from these individuals representing the RHA.

Judy Podobni welcomed everyone, reminisced about the ambulance service, including the first run on the May long weekend in 1976, and some of her recruitment efforts.

Mano Wiens, one of the original ambulance volunteers, was recognized and a few anecdotes were shared about some ambulance runs with him. As was stated, "Mano is not as innocent as he looks."

Charlie Abbott, who volunteered in the early years of the ambulance service, was also recognized.

Reeve Cyril Druwe shared a congratulatory message and spoke of how proud we are of our ambulance service history, training and paramedics. His remarks were followed by Callum Melvin, Regional EMS Manager.

Melvin stated that many paramedics from Oak Lake have gone on to become educators, have helped influence the EMS system in Manitoba, and are working across Manitoba.

Lunch, beverages, anniversary cake and ice cream were enjoyed by everyone as they visited and reminisced.

It was a wonderful few hours and everyone who attended was glad they had.

Mike Wiens honoured during Paramedic Services Week

Submitted
BY OAK LAKE NEWS

May 17 to 23 was designated Canadian Paramedic Services Week. The College of Paramedics of Manitoba gave recognition to paramedics throughout the week. Mike Wiens was nominated for this recognition. Following is the nomination information.

"Last year, Mike received his 30-year service award in EMS, an incredible milestone that reflects a lifetime dedicated to caring for others."

"Even after three decades in the profession, Mike continues to work part-time on the ambulance while also dedicating himself full-time to educating and mentoring the next generation of paramedics."

"As an instructor, Mike leads with patience, encouragement and professionalism. He never makes students feel small for asking questions or struggling with a skill. Instead, he creates an environment where students feel supported, capable and confident enough to grow."

"Whether he is caring for a patient, supporting a student, or helping a colleague, he consistently leads with kindness and integrity, leaving a lasting impact on the people around him."

"Mike represents the very best of paramedicine: professionalism, humility, leadership and heart."

— College of Paramedics of Manitoba

Proud mom is Kathy Wiens and very proud grandfather is Mano Wiens, who was one of the founding members of the Oak Lake Ambulance in 1976.

Manitoba Motocross action at MADESA

By Jessica Coulter
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The races have taken place over the past two weekends at the MADESA track just north of Virden. The first weekend, May 23 - 24, saw 353 entries for Round Two of the Manitoba Motocross. A lot of the riders came out from Saskatchewan for the first weekend.

The weekend of May 30 - 31 had 279 entries for Round Three. Mark Cosgrove, track organizer, said he was happy with the turnout. He feels that more people are getting interested from both eastern Manitoba and west (Saskatchewan) of Virden. The Cosgrove family puts in a ton of work to prepare the track and the grounds for the riders to be safe and for the weekend to be full of fun and healthy competition.

Two vendors from Winnipeg and two vendors from Brandon attend the weekend events. With so many riders at these events, it is a great place to display their new products, both bikes and gear.

There will be national races taking place in Pilot Mound at the Prairie Hill MX track on June 13 - 14. Round 4 of the Manitoba Motocross will be June 20 - 21 at Shadow Valley Raceway in Morden, MB.

With seven more races to go this summer, current standings after three rounds for Virden and area local racers are:



Rider #12 Sam Cosgrove competes in both 250cc Pro and Open Pro.



PHOTOS BY JESSICA COULTER

A dirt bike starting line is a high-stakes, adrenaline-fueled launch where racers pack tightly side-by-side behind a mechanical drop gate.

DECLAN COSGROVE ~ #51 ~ VIRDEN, MB

Event	Place	Points
Open Pro	18th	35

GAVIN REMPEL ~ #809 ~ KENTON, MB

Event	Place	Points
250CC Intermediate	3rd	326
Open Intermediate	2nd	351

JAYDEN LESLIE ~ #727 ~ ELKHORN, MB

Event	Place	Points
250CC Intermediate	4th	276
Open Intermediate	4th	284

KEEGAN REMPEL ~ #44 ~ KENTON, MB

Event	Place	Points
2 Stroke Open Junior	7th	173
Open Junior	40th	7

MIKE WATERFIELD ~ #833 ~ ELKHORN, MB

Event	Place	Points
Plus 50 B	3rd	305

RYLAN DEAN ~ #12 ~ OAK LAKE, MB

Event	Place	Points
Open Intermediate	16th	47

SAM COSGROVE ~ #12 ~ VIRDEN, MB

Event	Place	Points
250cc Pro	6th	230
Open Pro	9th	188

SAVANNA FELDMAN ~ #848 ~ VIRDEN, MB

Event	Place	Points
250cc Junior	29th	33
Ladies Open	1st	351
Open Junior	32nd	24

SAWYER BARNESKY ~ #673 ~ VIRDEN, MB

Event	Place	Points
Open Intermediate	6th	255

SHELDON REMPEL ~ #74 ~ KENTON, MB

Event	Place	Points
Open Intermediate	19th	29

May has been a wonderfully full month for SAIL



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

A presentation from the RCMP Officer, Amy Doan at Princess Lodge

Submitted
By KRISTA PEDERSON

around town.

Here's a taste of what we were up to at SAIL.

May 25 saw the end of our Advanced Care Planning sessions with Christine Cross.

If you missed it and have some questions, or you want access to the materials, please give me a call. 204-748-2323

May 27, Princess Lodge common room filled up for a presentation from the RCMP Officer, Amy Doan. She gave us a presentation on safety, motorized mobility and personal safety aids, safety, and scam awareness. We had a chance to ask questions, and she patiently answered all of them. Thank you so much for giving



A trip out to IKay Greenhouse, south of Cromer on May 29.

us your time!

And on May 29, we took a trip out to IKay Greenhouse, south of Cromer, for some wonderful plants, and then, of course, stopped by the Cromer Valley store for treats on the way home. We braved a terrific wind on Friday!

Thanks for participating in our events.

Each month, we have posters up around town for our upcoming events. Keep your eyes open!

And of course, there's so much coming in the summer. Please continue to invite a friend. Our most important contribution to the community is our connections. They do take time to build, so build: one phone call at a time, one event at a time, one conversation at time...they make our community the vibrant, friendly place it is.

Arts Mosaic welcomes new staff

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

For 44 years, the CP Train Station has been the focus for artists in the area.

There, Arts Mosaic welcomes a new administrator, Lauren Shymanski, to the Station.

Alix Potrebka has finished her work as Arts Mosaic administrator. She made the centre a welcoming space, but her last day was May 29th.

Arts Mosaic program and the Station space received an update a couple of years ago, increasing their open hours, and has enjoyed an uptick in public participation, with well-attended receptions that include musical entertainment.

Alix built upon the work of her predecessor Opeyemi Olukotun, a Nigerian-Canadian artist based in Brandon. Alix lives in Shilo where her husband is part of the Canadian Forces. Alix says, "I'm sad to be leaving Arts Mosaic, but excited to take on new projects a little closer to home in Shilo."

Lauren is from Brandon originally, but is relocating to Virden. She's excited to join the Virden arts community

and jump into all the programs Arts Mosaic provides.

An instrumentalist (saxophone) and a soprano with Konektis Choir, Lauren's hobbies include stained glass, sewing, baking, and carpentry.

Daelyn Fefchak returns as Arts Mosaic's summer student for her fourth summer. She will be hosting the summer programming and leading the summer choir program.

The Station administrator arranges the monthly art shows in the gallery. Art works are often for sale there. Mosaic Market offers unique hand crafts from jewellery and skin care to purses, and canvas art.

Also here, you can purchase a numbered print of the CP Station done by Dr. William Hobbs a master painter of Railways.

The Historic CP Station in Virden is at 425 6th Avenue, open Tuesday through Saturday. Day to day operations of Virden's famous Costume Closet (just across 6th Ave.) are overseen by Arts Mosaic.

The Station Administrator, summer students, and volunteers, provide programming and workshops. (See Arts Mosaic social media for summer announcements.)



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WADDELL

On her final day at the CP Station, outgoing administrator Alix Potrebka (R) hands over the keys to new Arts Mosaic administrator Lauren Shymanski (C). Daelyn Fefchak (L) is Arts Mosaic summer student.

Hobbs prints a double tribute collectable



SUBMITTED PHOTO

This work by William G. Hobbs is available for purchase as a limited-edition print. A study of his train station artwork will reveal certain details that are repeated in every piece.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Historic CP Station is a landmark restored and serving the community as Arts Mosaic and it has also been preserved in an original oil painting by Dr. William Hobbs. Arts Mosaic has a framed print as well as unframed limited edition numbered prints by Hobbs.

These sizeable prints are available to the public for purchase.

History tells that it was the arrival of the CPR tracks in 1882 that was responsible for putting Virden on the map as a vital transportation and shipping hub for western Manitoba. The iconic fieldstone CPR Station was built in 1900.

The numbered prints were discovered some years ago, a treasure tucked away within the building, and a surprise to the Arts Mosaic board members of the day.

As a limited edition, this unique work is by no means overpriced as they pay a double tribute - to Canadian history and to a painter of renown.

According to a historical account on Arts Mosaic's website, Dr. William Hobbs did both his medical train-

ing and his training as an artist in England, and then came to Canada to make his career on the prairies. Coming to Western Canada to practice medicine in 1959, he was riding aboard a CPR passenger train out of Montreal, rounding the great lakes when the conductor called out: "Is there a doctor on board?"

A female passenger had gone into labour and needed to deliver her baby on the train. Dr. Hobbs was happy to oblige. He assisted in the delivery of a healthy baby.

CPR executives were very grateful, and presented Hobbs with a railway pass and gave him access to their archives of station plans and train locomotives and cars.

Wherever Dr. Hobbs practiced in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, he painted the stations and trains in the area, which earned him the title of Master Painter of Railways.

Recognition

CanadaArtist website calls William G. Hobbs (1927 - 2012), 'Canada's Favourite Train Artist'.

Hobbs was noted to say, "I love to paint, if you love to paint, you cannot be kept down...you must paint."

An account on this website of the painter/physician

says, "The demand for his paintings was so great, Hobbs was painting nearly every waking moment. It took months to create one single painting. Hobbs studied art in England, Canada, and the U.S. for many years.

"Each painting was carefully planned and researched with extreme enthusiasm. He painted in layers of paint like the old masters.

"You won't mistake his snow for cotton candy. It takes a long time to paint snow. Hobbs was obsessed with painting snow and did much of it with a brush with one hair, taking the canvas outside and into many different lights to try to get right. Some paintings even have a little gravel from the real location on the canvas and in the right light, you'll be taken back in time to the wonderful era of trains.

"He always hoped you'd enjoy this website with a cup of coffee and time to relax and enjoy the journey into his art where you catch a train and go into the station."

The site further records Hobbs words, "I must save the history of this wonderful place. When I stepped off the train in 1959, I had never seen open spaces like the prairies where trains define the landscape. The light forced me to paint. I had to capture it. I had to preserve it. You have to live here 20 years to understand it. I only know after nearly 50 years on the prairies I have almost captured the storms, the light, the skies, and the snow.

"Trains and painting are my life. I must paint all the stations west of the Hudson Bay or the history will be lost."

The late Queen Elizabeth was gifted a William (Bill) Hobbs painting. Recorded in the Brandon Sun the story is linked in CanadaArtist website. A caption of the art piece reads: Bruce Bumstead/Brandon Sun - Bill Hobbs with his painting depicting Queen Elizabeth II's 1970 stopover in La Broquerie, based on a photo that is notable for its casual feel.

According to Art Value (artvalue.ca) William Hobbs' work, 'Regina' was sold for \$330 as an 18 cm x 20 cm (7.09 in x 7.87 in) limited edition photolithographic 1982 print. While an original, Regina Canadian Pacific Railway Station, oil on linen, for sale by Saskatchewan NAC Auction House, Regina was estimated between \$10,000 - \$15,000. But as it was not sold last year when on offer, we don't know what it would fetch.

The numbered print of Virden CPR Station is a steal of a deal. Contact or visit Arts Mosaic for more information.

Funds generated from the sale of the prints are designated to support another piece of history - they will help refurbish the Caboose rail car that's parked at the Station.

It was like a family reunion

With athlete Mady Kennedy



Winnipeg endurance athlete Mady Kennedy with Elkhorn resident Ceanna Kyle (McColl).



PHOTOS BY ED JAMES

Troy Leslie, a longtime family friend hugs Mady.

By Ed James
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The first Elkhorn Pop-Up Market of the season was held on a perfect May 27 evening at the Elkhorn Ag. Society grounds, with all its amenities.

That evening there were about six area vendors, but it is early in the season. The on-site canteen was

doing a great business, with all the food that evening donated by the Elkhorn Elks and Twin Valley Co-op food store. Live music that evening was supplied by Ed and Friends, with all the revenue made that evening going to a special cause.

The special cause and visitor was Mady Kennedy, a name well known in the

Elkhorn area. Mady Kennedy is a young woman who is riding coast to coast in Canada on a bicycle to raise money for cancer research and a cure. Her goal is to raise \$1 Million in donations from communities across the country for the Canadian Cancer Society.

Because of the strong family connection to Elkhorn, (Mady's father Troy, uncle Sheldon and aunt Sherrie were all born here), many people came out to meet them. There were lots of hugs, smiles and memories shared among them.

In a speech Mady expressed her joy at being in Elkhorn to stop and meet so many family friends and to explain the purpose of her ride for a cancer cure, as the illness affects so many Canadian women.

She said that she was so surprised and overwhelmed by the kindness and family atmosphere of the community, calling it "very cool." She went on to add that the trip started in Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia, and it has had its ups and downs along the roads and highways. This included a lot of hills in the Maritimes, high winds and cool temperatures.

However, she is now looking forward to the Canadian Prairie provinces with their long, flat roads, but with some concerns about those Prairie



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WADELL

The beauty of nature on a hot spring day. On a beautiful spring day in Virden, these trees along with many other gorgeous sites could be seen on an afternoon walk around town.

winds. On average, she tries to ride 150 kilometres a day, given the driving conditions. They make planned stops in larger communities where they can share her message and the purpose of the ride.

When not cycling across Canada, Mady is a health fitness coach. Her end game is to reach the Pacific Ocean by June 14, 2026, where she will be celebrating her 30th birthday and hopefully having reached her \$1M goal or better.

Mady's speech was followed by a local resident who is now facing her second battle with cancer.

Her name is Ceanna Kyle (McColl). She was raised in Elkhorn and is a strong young woman with two children.

In her ongoing battle with cancer, she has shown great determination to beat it. All of her life she has been a hard worker on the family farm and business and just recently received her Class 1 Manitoba truck driving licence, which had her, until recently, delivering anhydrous ammonia to area farmers.

Ceanna spoke to the crowd about her battle with cancer and what she has to face in her second

bout. She thanked and praised Mady for her efforts to fundraise to help find a cure for cancer.

At the Pop-Up Market, Mady's road support team was selling support items for her bike journey across Canada.

I ended the evening by talking to Mady's father, Troy, whom I taught many years ago at Elkhorn School.

Troy said, "The Elkhorn Ag. Grounds stop was an awesome event, with so many familiar faces and so much support for Mady and her cause. Our stop here was like coming home."



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SPORTS

ANDREW EXCELS ON ICE AND IN CLASSROOM AT CANISIUS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Canisius University men's hockey team will miss Virden's Hunter Andrew as a player, student and person next season.

The son of Brock and Andrea Andrew, a finance major, graduated from the Buffalo, N.Y., institution in May. Last season, he wrapped up a successful four-year career with the Golden Griffins. Canisius University men's hockey head coach Trevor Large said Andrew is "a great, great person, competitive hockey player, great teammate. He's somebody that always came to the rink with joy. Very smart hockey player. ... He leaves a strong legacy behind. I know his teammates think very fondly of Hunter, and so does the coaching staff."

"I think very highly of him as a hockey player and very strongly as a person," Large said. "I know he's a Griff forever, and we were excited to have him in our program, and excited to see what he's going to do in the quote-unquote real world."

Andrew hopes to play professional hockey next season before diving back into academics. A finance major at Canisius, he is applying to Canadian law schools for the fall of 2027.

His older brother, Tanner, recently finished his first professional season with the ECHL's Wheeling Nailers and Norfolk Admirals. The brothers appreciate the backing they have received from their parents while pursuing their on-ice dreams.

"My family's support has always been the number one reason that I've been able to get to the level I'm at," Andrew said. "I'm sure my brother would say the same thing, but we wouldn't be where we are today without them, and we are both forever grateful for the support they have given us along the way."

He left Canisius with a degree and plenty of memories.

"There is nothing better than the times spent with the guys in the locker room. I have some of the best memories at Canisius in the locker room with the guys, either between periods or after practice, just hanging out and talking about whatever you can think of."

Andrew was part of Canisius's 2023 Atlantic Hockey tournament championship team. In his final season, 2025-26, the 6-foot, 175-pound forward posted career highs in goals (four), assists (eight) and points (12) in 30 games.

When asked about his increased points production, Andrew said, "This was just an opportunity thing for me; I always knew I



PHOTO BY TOM WOLF

Hunter Andrew has wrapped up a successful career on and off the ice at Canisius University.

could push through and perform at this level, but I was limited in opportunity during my first three years. This past year, I was able to push through and force myself into a role that wasn't given before."

He had two game-winning goals last season. Andrew recorded a career-high three assists against Mercyhurst University. In his last regular-season weekend series, he had a goal and an assist against Niagara University. Large said, "I think he was playing his best hockey at the end of his career, which is always a great thing for players to leave on such a good note."

"He's an IQ player, very good skill, good shot ... Extremely committed player. If there was sacrifice required on the ice, I know he was always willing to make it," Large said. "He could play with anybody, which is a great thing. He could play up and

down your lineup. He could play with the most skilled players and hang with those guys, because he could pass, he could shoot at a high level. He could play down your lineup. If you needed guys to sacrifice the body and block shots and make the effort plays, he would do that as well."

After his university season wrapped up, Andrew signed an amateur tryout agreement with the Greenville Swamp Rabbits. The ECHL squad is an affiliate of the National Hockey League's Los Angeles Kings.

"It was a really great experience getting to live the pro life and see what that was like," Andrew said. "I didn't end up getting into any games during my time there because they were dealing with roster issues as players returned from the AHL (American Hockey League, the NHL's top farm league), but I enjoyed my time there. Greenville is a beautiful city with great people, so it wasn't a tough place to hang out for a few weeks."

At Canisius University, Andrew embraced the opportunities and challenges of being a true student-athlete and competing at the NCAA Division I level, the highest in U.S. university athletics.

"As a university, they prioritize the school just as much as they do the sport, which really helped me grow in both areas," he said. "The finance program at Canisius is a top-tier program that allowed me to really challenge myself academically while playing at the highest level in collegiate hockey."

Andrew excelled in the classroom. He earned numerous academic honours, including Atlantic Hockey America's All-Academic Team, AHA Student-Athlete of the Year, and AHCA/Krampade All-American Scholar. As previously reported in the Empire-Advance, Andrew was part of his school's Golden Griffin Fund team that placed first in the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute Research Challenge of Western New York.

Regarding his school's finance program, he said, "It really challenged me academically to a level that I had never experienced before. I am used to being pushed to the edge physically playing hockey, but the finance program really pushed me mentally, and I learned a lot from those experiences. I also liked how Canisius had smaller classroom sizes; it was an environment that I was familiar with growing up in a small town, and I enjoyed it at Canisius. Being able to connect with the professors and talk through any problems I was facing was a huge help."

SPORTS NOTES: CHARLES AND NDSCS CAP SEASON WITH NJCAA NATIONAL TITLE

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Kendall Charles was hit with a wave of emotions when the North Dakota State College of Science women's softball team won the National Junior College Athletic Association Division III World Series.

The daughter of Joel and Dori Charles was a first-year member of the Wildcats squad that captured the championship in the Syracuse suburb of DeWitt, N.Y., in late May. The Wahpeton, N.D., school team routed Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, 15-3, in a second title tilt of the double-elimination tournament.

"After the final out, I think everything just hit me all at once," Charles said. "I was excited, relieved, and honestly a little shocked that we had actually won the World Series. Seeing all my teammates celebrate together is something I'll never forget."

She also had the opportunity to celebrate with her parents. They travelled to New York State to cheer Charles on.

"Having my parents at the World Series meant everything to me," she said. "They've supported me through so much softball over the years, so being able to share that moment with them and celebrate together made it even more special."

While the Wildcats experienced some adversity, including rain and a 19-hour bus ride, Charles described the World Series as "such an amazing experience." NDSCS won its first three games, including defeating Caldwell, 3-1, to earn a day of rest before the championship games. Caldwell came through the elimination bracket and then beat the Wildcats, 17-6.

In the Wahpeton Daily News, NDSCS head coach Mike Oehlke said that after the loss, he told his team "we had afforded ourselves to have a bad game with the way we had played the tourney up until then. No one had beaten us twice all year except

Iowa Western, which is a Division I powerhouse."

"Heading into the second game of the finals, our team was really confident but also focused," Charles said. "We knew it was going to be a tough game, so our attitude was just to stay positive, trust each other, and play our game the way we had all tournament."

In the winner-take-all second championship game, the Wildcats grabbed an early 5-0 lead. They held the Cobras to three runs, while scoring eight unanswered to win by the mercy rule.

Away from the diamond at the World Series, Charles and her teammates visited Niagara Falls. She said, "I was happy to get to see the USA side because I have only ever seen the Canadian side."

The powerhouse Wildcats finished the season with a 55-8 record. They won the Mon-Dak Conference championship and the Region XIII title. The team earned its second straight national championship and third in four years.

As a first-year student-athlete, Charles earned a contributing role in the NDSCS outfield and as a designated player. She appeared in 29 games and drove in seven runs.

Chastko at Memorial Cup

Former Virden Oil Capitals player Nolan Chastko helped the Everett (Wash.) Silvertips make it to the finals of the Memorial Cup, Canada's national major junior hockey championship. The Western Hockey League champion Silvertips fell in the finals to the Ontario Hockey League's Kitchener Rangers, 6-2. Everett beat the Quebec Maritimes Junior Hockey League's Chicoutimi Saguenéens 6-1 to advance to the championship game in Kelowna, B.C.

In six Memorial Cup games, Chastko recorded an assist. He suited up for Virden for two full seasons (2022-24) and as an affiliated player in 2021-22. A forward in Virden, Chastko played



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Kendall Charles poses with her parents, Joel and Dori, after winning the National Junior College Athletic Association Division III World Series

both forward and defence for the Silvertips this past season.

Oil Caps Sign Kuntz

The Virden Oil Capitals have signed Spencer Kuntz for the 2026-27 Manitoba Junior Hockey League season. The 2009-born Winnipegger played last season for his hometown's RINK Hockey Academy. A 6-foot-1, 180-pound defenceman, Kuntz scored six goals and recorded 25 points in 30 games last winter. He was the RHA U18 Prep team captain.

SPORTS

THOMPSON HEADS EAST TO JOIN HUSKIES

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virden's Dara Thompson is taking her game to the Maritimes.

The daughter of Kimorie Lees and Richard Thompson is transferring to Halifax's Saint Mary's University. The Huskies play in the Atlantic University Sport conference of U Sports, the highest level of Canadian university athletics. Thompson spent the first two seasons of her post-secondary career at Calgary's Mount Royal University.

"I am most excited for the hockey program and the atmosphere," Thompson said of her move east. "The girls seem amazing and have already reached out countless times to be friendly and introduce themselves. The coach (Chris Larade) also really cares about the team and the individuals he's bringing into the program. He puts a lot of emphasis on being a good teammate, which lays the foundation for a successful, close-knit group.

"I am also excited to be in a program where I can directly study linguistics. It is the perfect opportunity for me to further my education after my undergrad degree and pursue speech-language pathology.

"I am super proud and grateful to be headed out east in the fall and to have the opportunity to go somewhere new."

Whether Thompson is playing near the Calgary Tower or the Halifax Harbour, she knows she has the full support of her family.

"I can't even begin to express how much they have helped me throughout my hockey career," she said. "They have travelled many miles to watch me live out my dreams and have supported me throughout all of it. They provided me with everything to make playing at the university level possible. They are my biggest fans and I am so grateful.

"I am also so thankful for my older brother, Davis Thompson, who plays hockey at University of Central Oklahoma in the States. Growing up, he pushed me to be my best and gave me an excellent role model to look up to. He is truly the hardest-working person I know and I like to believe I picked up some of my traits from him."

Thompson described her second season at MRU as being "very memorable." She competed in 16 games for the Huskies.

"I had the privilege of living with three of my teammates and it was a blast," Thompson said. "The team culture was great, and having a roster full of best friends is something very special. Going into my second year, I felt I had a bit more of a routine and it was an easy transition."

At MRU, Thompson studied sociology. She took linguistics courses to help work toward her goal of becoming a speech-language pathologist and said she loved her studies last year. Thompson also appreciated playing at the U Sports level and in the Canada West conference.

"The thing that continues to surprise me about Canada West hockey is how fast-paced and competitive it is. Every



PHOTO BY ETHAN BOMHOF

Dara Thompson (15) celebrates with her Mount Royal University teammates.

year, you have girls from all over competing at a high level and everyone wants to be the best. What makes you stand out is the hard work that you put in at the rink, but also during your time away from the rink. There is truly no off-season if you want to compete at this level."

SWBL: FLANNERY HELPS ROCKETS IN VARIOUS WAYS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Pipestone product Logan Flannery is pleased to be back playing for the Reston

Rockets this summer.

The son of Wade and Kim Flannery finished his second year at the University of Manitoba in April. It is his third summer suiting up for his local South West Baseball League team.

"What I enjoy most about being a Rocket is the team culture and the group of guys we have," Flannery said. "I've played with the team the last couple of years as well, and it always has been a great group of guys to be around. Everyone gets along really well on and off the field, and it makes coming to the diamond enjoyable every time. We have a very competitive and skilled team, with guys having played at all different levels of the game.

"But with that, a big thing that stands out with our team is that we are never out of a game, no matter the score, we always rally and fight back to get into it and make things competitive. And our mindset and the chemistry of our team is a big reason why we've been able to stay consistent and have success as a team."

The Rockets were 1-1 last week. As of June 1, they had a 2-3 record in the SWBL. Flannery contributes to the Rockets in a variety of ways. He is typically at third base, in the corner outfield, and on the mound. As of June 1, Flannery had started two games for the Rockets, was second on the team in innings pitched at 8.66 and had struck out seven. Offensively, Flannery had stolen a base and driven in a run.

"Logan is a player who never complains and is adaptable to any position we need him in," Rockets player/organizer John Patmore said. "He has been and is going to throw a lot of valuable innings for us in the future. Logan possesses extra-base power and comes through quite often when we need him at the plate."

At the U of M, Flannery is pursuing a commerce degree in the Asper School of Business. This is the second summer that he has operated a Student Works franchise in Brandon and the surrounding areas. Flannery appreciates being able to compete for the Rockets.

"Being able to still play competitive ball means a lot because baseball has been such a big part of my life as long as I can remember, it's been a sport I've always loved, and being able to still play competitively is amazing," he said.

At home on May 29, the Rockets beat the Hamiota Red Sox, 7-2. Reston led 2-1 heading into the bottom of the fifth inning, when they scored four runs. Patmore drove in four runs and earned the win on the mound with a complete-game, nine-strikeout performance. Branden Ripley and Jack Kirkup each stole two bases. The Reston team fell 13-0 on the road to the Rivers Comets.

On June 2, the Rockets started a stretch of four road games. They played in Oak River that day and in Brandon, against the Young Guns, on June 4. Both games were after the Empire-Advance deadline. The Reston team is in Boissevain on June 7. The road swing ends on June 12 in Hamiota.

Virden Oilers

The Oilers fell 28-8 to the Oak River Dodgers in their



PHOTO BY KELBY LEWIS

Liam Banga is catching for Virden.

lone game last week. Braeden Lewis drove in two runs for Virden, while Toby Troughton pushed two across. Elisha Bambridge, Lewis and his brother, Tanner, each hit home runs.

The team hosted the Brandon Cardinals on June 2 after the Empire-Advance deadline. The Oilers play in Deloraine on June 7.

NHL PLAYOFFS

REF TO
WRITER

GERRY
NOLAN



Well, well, well. I certainly called the Colorado/Vegas series wrong. Colorado was dominated by Vegas who had tremendous goaltending from Carter Hart. The President trophy winners could not get it together in this series. Vegas shut down the middle of the ice and Colorado had no answer at all. Vegas will go to the Stanley Cup final for the third time in nine seasons, which is 3 more

times than most teams including the Winnipeg Jets who continue to have Kevin Cheledayoff as their general manager.

The Carolina Hurricanes will move to the Stanley Cup final as well, as they ended the Montreal Canadiens season in five games. The Habs just looked like they ran out of gas. Jakub Dobes had a tremendous playoff run for the Habs. The upside

for Montreal is that they are the youngest team in the NHL and for the next decade at least will have many more opportunities to bring the cup back to Montreal. This will probably only happen if Gary Bettman falls off the face of the earth. The officials are mostly Canadian but you can tell that Gary Bettman has a big influence on how games are called. It seems it is okay these days to run

and interfere with the Canadians goalies, but it is not the same for the opposition goalies.

The Stanley Cup final begins on Tuesday with Vegas going to Carolina. This is a hard one to pick but I will pick Carolina. Seth Jarvis, a good Manitoba boy needs to hoist the cup as the Manitoba boys from Vegas have already done that recently. See ya when it is over!

PC MLAs advocate for more tax relief for Manitobans

Submitted

By GREG NESBITT

Last week I joined my Progressive Conservative colleagues in an all-night sitting at the Manitoba Legislature to fight to improve the NDP government's Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act (BITSA) Bill. We worked around the clock to push for changes that would have put more money back into the pockets of hardworking Manitobans. Unfortunately, the NDP refused to listen to our ideas and passed the bill without making any changes.

One of the biggest things we fought for was raising Manitoba's Basic Personal Exemption (BPE) to \$30,000. This would mean Manitobans could earn up to \$30,000 before paying any provincial income tax. We believe people should be able to keep more of the money they earn, especially when families are dealing with high grocery bills, fuel prices, mortgage payments, rent, and inflation.

Our plan would have provided real savings for Manitoba families. We pushed for tax relief that could save families thousands of dollars every year. That is meaningful help for families trying to make ends meet. That is the kind of support people in Riding Mountain and across Manitoba have been asking for.

Instead, the NDP chose a different direction.

Rather than providing meaningful tax relief, the government offered what amounts to pennies in savings while moving ahead with measures that could increase costs in other areas. Instead of delivering real help to families, they focused on small PST breaks for junk food and other unhealthy snacks. These changes would only save a few cents on a grocery bill and only apply when people buy these types of foods. The NDP have pointed to these small PST savings as a win, but in reality, they would only amount to a few cents here and there for families.

Manitobans deserve more than pennies of savings at the checkout while their overall costs continue to rise. Our plan focused on giving families real financial relief, not political talking points. Manitobans know the difference.

During the debate on BITSA, our PC team made it clear we were willing to work with the government if they agreed to improve the bill. We certainly were not trying to stall the passage of the Bill just for political optics. We were fighting for changes that would help seniors on fixed incomes, young families buying homes, farmers facing rising costs, and workers trying to get ahead.

Unfortunately, the NDP government refused to work with us.

Instead, they used their majority in the Legislature to shut down our proposals and pass the bill exactly as written. Manitobans deserve to know that Progressive Conservative MLAs fought every step of the way to improve this legislation before it became law.

Those late-night sittings were not easy, but we believed the issue was too important to stay silent. We heard from many constituents who are worried about paying bills, buying groceries, and keeping up with rising costs and taxes. Those Manitobans deserved a voice in the Legislature, and our team was proud to stand up for them.

The NDP called BITSA an affordability package, but many Manitobans can see through the spin. Small credits and minor changes do little to help families struggling every day. At the same time, other parts of the bill could place more financial pressure on taxpayers and property owners.

I believe there is a better way forward.

Governments should focus on growing the economy, lowering taxes, and letting Manitobans keep more of their own money. Raising the Basic Personal Exemption would have encouraged work, investment, and



MLA Greg Nesbitt for Riding Mountain.

FILE PHOTO

economic growth while providing real help to families across our province.

The fight over BITSA was about more than one bill. It showed two very different visions for Manitoba's future. We fought for lower taxes, affordability, and economic growth. The NDP chose higher spending, limited tax relief, and policies many Manitobans believe will cost them more in the long run.

Even though the NDP passed BITSA without changes, our fight is not over. I will continue standing up for the residents of Riding Mountain and pushing for policies that make life more affordable for Manitoba families. Manitobans deserve a government that respects taxpayers, listens to concerns about rising costs, and provides real financial relief.

The long nights at the Legislature showed just how committed our PC team is fighting for Manitobans. While the government ignored our proposals this time, we will keep pushing for stronger tax relief and responsible policies that put Manitoba families first.

Families, seniors, farmers, and small business owners across Manitoba are working hard every day to make ends meet. They deserve a government that understands those challenges and delivers real relief instead of temporary fixes and political promises.

Manitobans deserve better than pennies in savings while costs continue to rise. They deserve leadership focused on affordability, opportunity, and helping families keep more money in their pockets.

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

Life in the slow lane

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

With all the extreme heat we had this week I was reminded of the long scorching summer of 1961. Simply put, it just did not rain. The crops dried up and so did the pastures. The cows did not milk very well either. The dugout was low and the creek that ran through our farm also dried up.

We could not even swim in the old swimming hole. I did one day and got cooled off and also got the itch. Calamine lotion was my constant companion for the rest of the summer. To say I was itchy was an understatement!

That summer the flies were worse than normal. We only had a half section of land as you know by now, but that year, according to my dad's permit book, he only had 948 bushels of wheat to take to the elevator in Harding. Not much grain!

We baled every field that was in crop as well any slough hay we could get. That along with oats and barley would feed the livestock as well. This was also the year we built the new barn. Water was going to be a problem. By the New Year, the dugout was out of water, dried up and froze up. Fortunately, Wally Gray had a spring in his pasture and offered dad to use the spring to water the cattle! Wally and Dora Gray were just the greatest neighbours one could have.

It was so hot some days that mom would not let me go outside to play. There was a lot of time spent in the cool basement of our house. Obviously, we did not have air conditioning so trying to sleep was not a whole lot of fun!

That summer we hauled 50-gallon drums of water from the dugout to water the garden. Without the garden we would have been in bad shape. Somehow, we pulled through and the next year things were back to normal as we had a lot of snow the next winter, so the runoff filled the dugout and the creek.

I did not see another drought until the late 1980s and really do not want to see another drought, never. Speaking of drought, right now we need to have some rain, like 3 days of it!



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**EFFICIENCY
MANITOBA**

MPI launches new Road Safety Strategy 2030 - Safer Roads: A Shared Journey

Submitted
By MPI MEDIA RELATIONS UNIT

As Canada Road Safety Week begins, Manitoba

Public Insurance (MPI) is proud to launch Road Safety Strategy 2030 – Safer Roads: A Shared Journey (RSS 2030), its new five-year plan to reduce serious injuries and fatalities on Manitoba roads.

The strategy reflects MPI’s responsibility as a public auto insurer by incorporating the latest collision data and reflecting what Manitobans and partners shared matters most to them when it comes to road safety.

Developed through extensive consultation, it focuses on four pillars: building a stronger road safety culture, forming partnerships based on shared responsibility, improving driving behaviours using targeted and evidence-based programs, and advancing road safety and reconciliation in collaboration with Indigenous communities. Overall, MPI heard from more than

65 organizations and nearly 3,000 Manitobans who shared their time, experience, and perspectives to help shape the plan, making it one of MPI’s largest engagement efforts in its 55-year history.

“We believe that the people and organizations who work in, interact with, and are affected by the road system every day are our essential partners in shaping a credible and effective road safety strategy,” said Satvir Jatana, President & CEO. “Because of their input, each pillar of our plan represents an area where MPI can influence meaningful change alongside its partners across the province.” RSS 2030 is aligned with Canada’s Road Safety Strategy 2035+ and the principles of Vision Zero, which aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. It also reflects the specific realities of Manitoba’s road safety landscape. Through MPI’s consultations, Manitobans and organizations stressed the need to address high-risk behaviours that remain leading contributors to fatalities in Manitoba, including speeding, distracted driving, impairment

and failure to wear seatbelts.

Engagement results also revealed a need for driver education that better reflects the diversity of road users and travel environments. This includes modernizing driver training, expanding programming for cyclists and pedestrians, improving access to training in rural and northern regions, and offering more resources for newcomers. Participants also identified driver education, road design, and enforcement as the top factors influencing safety throughout the province.

“The foundation of the plan is built on the fact that road safety is a shared responsibility and that we all play a role in making roads safer. Every Manitoban, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and passengers, has a role to play in creating safer roads,” said Jatana.

“MPI is committed to creating meaningful change together with the people, communities and organizations who are also working every day to make Manitoba’s roads safer.”

RSS 2030 – Safer Roads: A Shared Journey is available on mpi.mb.ca.

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Notice



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

DEVELOPMENT PLAN – TRANS CANADA WEST PLANNING DISTRICT

Under authority of *The Planning Act*, the Planning District Board will hold a public hearing at the time and location listed below to hear from and receive representations from any persons who wish to make them in respect to the following:

BY-LAW NO. 61, TO ADOPT A DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE TRANS CANADA WEST PLANNING DISTRICT (INCLUDING THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF WALLACE-WOODWORTH, AND THE TOWN OF VIRDEN)

DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION:

Monday, July 13th, 2026 at 7:00 pm
 Tundra Oil & Gas Place
 900 5th Ave.
 Virden, MB

FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Alleesha MacDonald
 Secretary-Treasurer
 Trans Canada West Planning District
 (204) 748-7239

A copy of the proposed materials may be arranged for review through the contact above.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: RODNEY BRENT HAINES, late of the Town of Virden, in the Province of Manitoba, deceased;

ALL claims against the above estate, duly verified by Statutory Declaration, must be filed with the undersigned at their office, 243 Raglan Street W., Box 520, Virden, MB, R0M 2C0, on or before the 15th day of July, 2026.

DATED at Virden, Manitoba, this 3rd day of June, 2026.

ANIQUE TIMMERMAN –
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Thank-You

Thank You

Elkhorn School Parent Committee would like to thank all the volunteers who helped make this event happen! The parents who donated! The businesses who graciously gave to us! To everyone who made sweet treats for the Sweet Treat Stroll! To everyone who attended the evening! It was a wonderful success! Thank you!!

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Any personal information provided including employment equity declarations will be used for employment and/or statistical purposes and is protected by The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Alternate formats available upon request

Help Wanted



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ACCOUNTS PAYABLE CLERK

Job Description

The Rural Municipality of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a motivated individual for the full time position of **Accounts Payable Clerk** at the Virden Municipal Office. The Accounts Payable Clerk reports to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and will be responsible for providing financial support to the CAO and the CFO.

Description and Qualifications

- Receive, process, verify, and reconcile invoices, statements, and refund requisitions, etc. - in compliance with the existing financial policies and procedures of the Municipality
- Process all approved invoices into the municipal accounting software, Muniware ensuring accurate coding and description entry
- Produce various financial statements and verify vendor accounts by reconciling monthly statements and related transactions
- Compile files for inventory and Asset Management purposes
- Ensure positive vendor relationships acting as a representative of the Municipality
- Cross training to provide other financial and administrative support ie. semi-monthly payroll; grant applications; position coverage for LUD offices and reception, as needed
- Active role in the Municipal Safety Program
- Uphold a strict level of confidentiality
- All other duties as assigned

Skills and Qualifications

- Attention to detail, thoroughness, and organizational skills are required
- Minimum 1-year previous experience as an Accounts Payable Clerk is preferred
- High school graduate at minimum; post-secondary education in a related field, would be considered an asset
- Demonstrated proficiency with computer applications – Microsoft Office products including Excel, Word, Outlook, etc.
- Experience with the Muniware Accounting Program – would be considered an asset
- Must be self-motivated who is able to complete data entry independently
- Customer service and negotiation skills
- Completion of the Certificate in Manitoba Municipal Administration will be considered an asset

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Job Description

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a strategic, experienced, and innovative **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)** to lead its financial management and long-term fiscal planning. As a key member of the senior management team, the CFO is responsible for providing expert advice to Council and the CAO, ensuring the financial health of the municipality, implementing the asset management plan, and aligning financial strategies with the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan and beyond. This position will report directly to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the preparation of annual operating and capital budgets and long-term financial forecasts
- Provide expert analysis on financial trends, risks, and opportunities
- Coordinate year-end financial statements and the municipal audit process
- Ensure compliance with PSAB standards and provincial financial regulations
- Develop and implement financial policies, reserve strategies, and internal controls
- Support the preparation and tracking of grant applications and related reporting obligations
- Collaborate with department heads on financial planning for capital projects and service delivery
- Prepare financial summaries and support the CAO with information for Council decision-making
- Ensure awareness of legislation related to payroll, pensions, and benefits to support HR/payroll compliance

Qualifications

- Degree in Accounting, Finance or Economics; CPA designation required (or legacy CA, CMA, or CGA)
- Minimum of 3-5 years of progressive experience in finance, with experience in a strategic role; experience in municipal finance an asset
- Strong knowledge of budgeting, financial reporting, and grant management
- Proficiency with municipal financial systems (e.g., Muniware) is an asset
- Understanding of PSAB and the Manitoba Municipal Act is an asset
- Strong leadership, organizational, and communication skills
- Familiarity with employment-related financial legislation and benefits compliance
- A Certificate in Manitoba Municipal Administration will be an asset
- Familiarity with asset management, capital planning, and rural infrastructure is highly desirable

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RECREATION MANAGER

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a dynamic and community-oriented professional to join our team as the **Community Economic Development & Recreation Manager**. This full-time management position plays a key role in implementing the R.M.'s 2025–2030 Strategic Plan by fostering economic growth, supporting business development, leading communications strategies, and enhancing recreational services. The successful candidate will oversee the development of a Recreation Plan, expand municipal programming, support local organizations and community committees, and improve engagement through strategic marketing and communication efforts.

Key Responsibilities

- Develop and implement an Economic Development Strategy aligned with the Strategic Plan
- Support Council-appointed Community Development Steering Committees
- Promote business investment readiness and support local business retention
- Lead the development of a municipal Recreation Plan and expand community programming
- Assist in tourism initiatives, land-use planning, and infrastructure readiness
- Research, apply for, and manage grants to support municipal initiatives
- Provide regular updates and strategic recommendations to Council

Qualifications

- Post-secondary education in Economic Development, Business, Recreation Management or related field
- Familiarity with rural economic development and recreation planning
- Experience in a similar role with grant writing, project coordination, and stakeholder engagement
- Completion of (or commitment to complete) the EDAM Community Edge program
- Valid driver's license and willingness to travel regionally

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

E-mail: info@wallace-woodworth.com

Mail/Drop-off: R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth Municipal Office
154023 PR 257 Box 2200 (Corner of 83 Hwy & PR 257) Virden, MB R0M 2C0

We appreciate your interest in this position. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. However, only those applicants chosen for an interview will be contacted.

www.wallace-woodworth.com | 204-748-1239 | info@wallace-woodworth.com

CLASSIFIEDS

Tender

LAND FOR SALE BY TENDER – RM OF MARYFIELD No. 091

Legal Land Description	Assessed Value	Taxable Assessment	Total Acres
*NE 12 –12- 30 W1	\$399,800.00	\$150,800.00	160.76 (142 cultivated)
NW12 –12- 30 W1	\$245,400.00	\$134,790.00	160.68 (136 cultivated)
SE 12 –12- 30 W1	\$260,100.00	\$143,055.00	160.75 (139 cultivated)
SW 13 –12- 30 W1	242,900.00	\$133,595.00	160.7 (136 cultivated)
			Total Acres: 642.89

*home quarter

Particulars: Four quarters of cleared, well drained land with 588 cultivated acres (more cultivated acres than SAMA states) and an approximately 10 acre yard site with a 1120 square foot bungalow built in 1969, 60x40 shop, bins and stock shelters.

Conditions:

1. The highest or any tender may not necessarily be accepted as the owner reserves the right to reject any and all tenders. Deposits will be returned to the unsuccessful tenders;
2. Tenders must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "Land Tender" to the undersigned law firm on or before 12 o'clock noon, local time June 30, 2026;
3. Land sold as one parcel;
4. Bidders will not be called together following the submission of bids;
5. Bids shall include a bank draft or certified cheque payable to Osman & Company Law Office for 5% of the tendered amount (deposits of unsuccessful tenders will be returned);
6. Persons submitting a tender must rely on their own research and inspection of the property to confirm condition, other particulars and acreage;
7. The successful tender shall be required, following closure of the tender process, to enter into a written agreement prior to July 15, 2026 with the registered Owners for the purchase of the land. The Closing date shall be October 1, 2026 and the deposit shall be nonrefundable.
8. In the event the Purchaser fails to pay the balance of the purchase price on or before the 1st day of October 2026 (the "Closing Date"), the deposit equivalent to five (5%) percent of the final tender, shall be forfeited absolutely to the registered owner as liquidated damages.

Inquiries can be directed by email to ebolton@osman-law.ca

Forward bids to:

Osman & Company Law Office – Land Tender

Attn: Erin Bolton
1103 Broadway Avenue
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Osman & Company
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Help Wanted

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Position for an Educational Assistant at the Kola Community School, beginning September 2026 to June 2027, every Tuesday and Thursday from 8:45 - 12 pm. Successful applicant would assist with individual learning needs and help maintain a focused and productive classroom environment. Interested candidates should contact Elly Martens at 204-512-0821 or gemfarms@hotmail.com by June 17th 2026.

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ADVERTISE HERE

Council supports oil well development, rural EMS changes

Wallace-Woodworth council meeting, May 26

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Corex Resources Well Application

Council considered an application submitted by Corex Resources Limited to the province seeking approval for an additional oil well. Corex already operates two producing wells on the property and now wishes to add a third. Although the traffic from the development would travel along a primary road within the municipality, Corex enters into road use agreements during road ban periods. Council will send a letter of support for the application to provincial authorities.

Weed control

CAO Iris Vercaigne reported that Weed Supervisor, Breanna Plaisier, conducted field scouting, updated municipal no-spray zones and completed an inventory of existing chemical supplies in order to determine requirements for the coming season.

Based on those findings, council approved the purchase of the municipality's full 2026 chemical requirements from Redfern Farm Services at an estimated cost of \$26,658 for the weed spraying and scrubbing program.

AMM resolutions

As reported in last week's Empire-Advance the Western District of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) will meet on June 16 in Melita. At this meeting member municipalities will present advocacy resolutions that will be forwarded to the other districts of the AMM.

Wallace-Woodworth will present a resolution regarding the Shared Health directive that requires ambulance services to perform inter-facility transfers even when minimum local ambulance coverage is not guaranteed. The resolution asks Shared Health to change the directive to ensure coverage is maintained. The resolution was supported by the RMs of Glenboro-South Cypress, Deloraine-Winchester, Elton and Town of Virden.

Another resolution concerning gopher control received support from Deloraine-Winchester, Town of Virden and Hamiota. Two other municipalities declined to support this resolution due to concerns about the potential poisoning of wildlife and birds.

Council also proposed a resolution regarding the transition from the previous firefighter certification process to a new process. The resolution asks the Manitoba Emergency Services College to provide transition measures for firefighters who were previously enrolled under the old standard. These measures would extend current qualification to pre-

vent trainees from losing progress already completed.

Education funding

Park West School Division is seeking municipal support for its lobbying efforts aimed at securing more stable and predictable provincial education funding. The division reported receiving only a 0.7 per cent funding increase for 2026-27, following a one per cent increase the previous year. Council will provide a letter of support.

Enbridge power application

Council considered a request to support a power application from Enbridge to Manitoba Hydro. Enbridge has provided little detailed information regarding potential impacts on future development. Council agreed to provide the letter of support along with a description of municipal concerns. A separate communication to Manitoba Hydro will also be submitted.

Community support

Council considered a request from the Lions Club Campground for assistance with a tree removal project. After discussion, council approved a \$500 donation from the 2026 special events budget and encouraged the Lions Club to seek matching support from the Town of Virden.

Council reviewed a funding request from the Virden High School Rodeo Finals. Wallace-Woodworth had contributed \$350 in 2025 and approved an increase to \$500 for 2026.

Council approved a \$1,000 contribution to the Elkhorn Western Weekend from the special events budget.

Elkhorn LUD

Coun. Denis Lachapelle reported that the Elkhorn LUD committee reviewed a list of sidewalks requiring repair or replacement and identified several locations needing attention. The committee also examined traffic concerns near the daycare and school, where congestion has become a problem during morning and afternoon pickup periods.

The committee discussed establishing a compost collection site at the

former landfill north of town. The site would accept yard waste such as leaves and grass on the first and third Mondays of each month

Kenton LUD

Coun. Diana MacDonald reported that the committee discussed Green Team hiring and that a returning employee who had performed well the previous year had accepted the position.

Concerns have been raised about potholes and frost boils throughout Kenton. Committee members toured the community and compiled a list of problem areas.

A massage therapist who had previously operated from the restaurant will now work out of the Woodworth Senior Services (WSS) office.

MacDonald also participated in a farm tour involving first-year medical students. The group included students from Manitoba, Ontario and Iran.

Many of the students had little or no previous farm experience but they got an introduction to cattle, pigs, horses, sheep and poultry as well as vegetable production. MacDonald said the tour focused on soil health and modern farming practices, helping these future physicians to gain a better understanding of rural communities and agriculture.

Other business

Council approved payment of an invoice from Samson Developments for \$6,519.12 to release the holdback funds for a bridge repair project on Road 133W south of Road 62N.

Payment was approved to Accent Striping and Lettering Corp. Ltd. in the amount of \$2,744 for work on the Woodworth Fire Department rescue vehicle.

Council approved awarding a five-year agricultural lease to Larry and Tona-Lee Rhodes for pastureland at NW 34-10-27. The lease will run from May 1, 2026, to Oct. 31, 2030, at a rate of \$60 per cultivated acre, producing an annual lease payment of \$7,200.



Floodplain producers push for compensation



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

The sleepy old Assiniboine River looks more like a lake east of Virden on May 24.

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Assiniboine Valley Producers Association (AVPA) representatives Keith Pearn, Stan Cochrane and Kevin Pearn attended the Wallace-Woodworth council meeting on May 26. The AVPA is an organization that includes producers from Shellmouth to Brandon and represents more than 100 farm families impacted by flooding. The delegation had prepared a presentation outlining concerns with the operation of the Shellmouth Dam and the impacts of current flood-management practices.

Shellmouth dam drawdown

The delegation argued that reservoir levels before the spring runoff were not lowered enough despite forecasts indicating a significant flood event. They noted that operating guidelines call for drawdowns to 1,386 feet above sea level and that the reservoir was lowered only to about 1,386.4 feet. They questioned why water levels were not reduced further, pointing out that during major flood years such as 2011 and 2013, levels were lowered to approximately 1,383 feet.

They emphasized that while water levels may return to the riverbanks during June, flows over the Shellmouth spillway are expected to continue for much of the month. This situation leaves land below Shellmouth at risk as any increase in the inflow will immediately be passed downstream with no room for storage in the reservoir.

Keith Pearn explained, "We're not here tonight complaining because we're flooded. We live in a floodplain, we know we can get flooded. But we're getting flooded far too long." He believes that government management decisions are causing water to remain on

their land much longer than necessary.

Pearn referred to previous studies completed for the provincial government by KGS Group, a Winnipeg engineering and consulting company, that showed approximately 40,000 acres of productive farmland between Shellmouth and Brandon are subject to flooding. Annual damages in 2014 dollars were estimated at roughly \$15.2 million for the stretch between St. Lazare and Grand Valley when flooding persists into June.

The same studies concluded that installing gates on the Shellmouth Dam would provide noticeable benefits and would offer flood-control advantages during flood years. These gates could temporarily increase storage capacity by raising the spillway height by several feet. This would allow operators to hold back additional water during high-flow periods and provide greater control over releases. Floodgates had been promised in the past but were never constructed.

The KGS study also examined the possibility of constructing dikes from St. Lazare to Brandon. While this project would be prohibitively expensive because of construction costs and the need for pumping stations, the study also recognized that dikes would eliminate the floodplain's ability to store water. Pearn said this confirms that agricultural lands in the valley are being used as a flood-management tool. He argued that producers deserve compensation because their land is providing flood-storage benefits that help protect Brandon and downstream communities.

Saskatchewan drainage

Stan Cochrane described the influence of increased drainage in Saskatchewan on the Assiniboine River

in Manitoba. Cochrane said, "The Manitoba government has never done very much to try and get Saskatchewan to slow down on the drainage." Pearn added, "Saskatchewan's allowed to drain whatever they want. There's no rules in Saskatchewan for draining water. They are supposed to have a permit, but they just go and drain. If they have water backed up in a field against the road, they'll go get a hoe and cut the road. They don't fill the road back in. They throw a culvert in there."

History of compensation efforts

There is a long history of attempts by AVPA to secure government recognition and compensation for the impacts of flooding. Pearn recalled that despite repeated meetings with ministers over the years, meaningful action has never materialized. He spoke of assurances during the 2022 flood from then-minister Derek Johnson that producers would be looked after if crops could not be seeded. He said those promises never translated into compensation.

The Shellmouth Dam Compensation Act ultimately proved ineffective because compensation was restricted to cases of "artificial flooding." Pearn claims that dam operations have since been managed specifically to avoid creating situations that would qualify as artificial flooding, effectively preventing compensation claims. Releasing water early in the season could make more reservoir capacity available in the spring but any flooding from this release would have to be compensated as it would be an artificial flood. Pearn stated, "That's a terrible way to run a flood control dam. [It] puts everybody from here to Winnipeg in jeopardy."

Rising water flows

Cochrane stated that Birdtail Creek has experienced a 54 per cent increase in flow over roughly the past two decades, while Smith Creek has nearly doubled, increasing by 98 per cent. Other tributaries also are showing increases of around 50 per cent. He claims that these figures demonstrate significantly more water entering the watershed than government officials acknowledge.

They also observed noticeable changes along the Assiniboine River itself, including accelerated erosion and the rapid formation of new river channels and oxbows during flood events. Features like these used to take decades to develop but are now appearing in a single flood season.

Request for municipal support

The delegation noted that approximately 30 per cent of the affected 40,000 acres—about 12,000 acres—lie within the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, making the municipality a significant stakeholder in the issue.

The delegation asked council to support several advocacy efforts. They urged the municipality to request updates to the Shellmouth Dam operating guidelines and to ensure producer representatives are involved in those discussions. They argued that water should be released earlier and at higher rates before flood conditions develop.

Oak Lake Ambulance answers 300 calls per year

Submitted
By OAK LAKE NEWS

Continued from May 29 issue. Oak Lake History Book Volume 2, 2025 ed.

From January to July of 2003, Oak Lake Ambulance had to shut down due to staffing issues, but with the RM providing accommodation for one provider and the same dedicated members of the team, the ambulance was able to begin 24-hour service again in July. The ambulance was equipped with a defibrillator, pulse oximeter, glucometer and better splinting equipment, all purchased with donation money from the community.

The Manitoba Telecommunications Centre took over dispatching in 2007 for all ambulances in Manitoba outside of Winnipeg. The dispatchers were highly trained and used a national dispatching system. Call volume for Oak Lake had more than doubled and was more than 200 calls per year.

Another amalgamation occurred in 2008, with the southwest and north up to Riding Mountain making up the region known as Prairie Mountain Health. With this came more changes. Increased requirements for training were coming into effect.

Two full-time positions were created in Oak Lake, along with seven casual providers who continued to do paid on-call at night and on weekends, plus they got paid wages while out on a call. This resulted in higher trained personnel with access to more medications and training to bring the Emergency Room into homes, but at the same time made it very difficult to recruit members because of the time commitment.

A celebration of 35 years of service was held at the community hall in 2011 to thank all those who led the way. Also in 2011, Oak Lake Ambulance received a large donation from the Dorothy Baillie estate, enabling the purchase of the first hydraulic lift stretcher in the region. Call volume for Oak Lake with 24-hour coverage was now at 500 calls per year.

The only constant thing in life is change, and so it is in Emergency Medical Services. In late 2020 one of the full-time people took employment elsewhere and the other one was moved to Virden. The remaining seven casual workers continued to provide service for nights and weekends.

As of December 2024, there are only five casual providers who continue to staff the ambulance most nights. Covering only nights, the call volume for the station is still at approximately 300 calls per year.

Elkhorn School bids farewell to teacher of 31 years

By Ed James
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Following the Elkhorn School Spring Concert, Principal Lance Barrate presented a farewell program for teacher Katrinka Johnson, who is retiring after teaching for 31 years at Elkhorn School.

Barrate's comments, he gave praise to Mrs. Johnson as a co-worker, school leader and for her busy history at Elkhorn School over the years.

A video presentation showed predictions from her younger students, with hand-drawn pictures of what she might do in retirement. Another section of the video showed photos of her over the years and ended with testimonials from former and present teachers she has worked with.

Light refreshments were served and Katrinka visited with former teaching staff and students. During her time at Elkhorn School, she has taught science, math, physical education and music, and was always active in school staff and community projects.

In a brief conversation with her before she left the gym, she said, "This farewell event was a fabulous gesture, with so many kind words and hugs from students, family, friends and co-workers, past and present. I felt a lot of love from the community and I am so grateful to be part of the Elkhorn community family. The school, staff and community



PHOTO BY ED JAMES

Families join Katrinka in her retirement celebration following the Elkhorn School Spring Concert on May 29: (L to R) Lloyd & Marilyn Carruthers, Katrinka & Rodney Johnson and Sharon and Ken Johnson, at Katrinka's retirement celebration at Elkhorn school.

have always been there for me."

On a closing note, as I listened to the band students, I was waiting for a special and familiar

sound. But that day there was only one squeaky reed. The band kids are getting better, the way I see it!

Elkhorn School Spring Concert features young musicians

By Ed James
EMPIRE-ADVANCE



PHOTOS BY ED JAMES

Kindergarten students at the Elkhorn School Spring Concert, sing "Rainbow Song" with hand movements.

Spring has finally arrived and at Elkhorn School, that means it's time for the spring students concert.. It's an event where the students at the various music and band levels get to show their progress to the public.

On May 29, the school gym filled up so quickly that extra chairs had to be brought in. Both the kindergarten and Grade 1 students performed songs that involved lots of physical animation, including one called "I Need a Home for My Dinosaurs."

The combined Grade 2/3 students did rhythmic drumming on bright yellow baskets under the direction of music teacher Robert Manigus, performing a song by Bruno Mars called "Count Me." All during the event, some of the children on the risers took time to wave to their parents and grandparents in the audience.

There were so many new family faces as the Elkhorn community grows. A special group were several residents from the local seniors' home, brought by the Handi-Van, driven by local farmer Dave Shellenberg.

Next on the playbill were Grade 4s and their recorder instruments, a primary instrument used to teach the basics of note scales and instrument fingering. Grade 5 did a great job of the classic "You Are My Sunshine."

Then it was time for a different level of music talent- the Grade 6 to 12 band students. Grade 6 students, with a little help from senior band students, did a number of short sampling selections, while the Grade 7/8 band students performed a visual musical piece called "Train Heading West!"

The senior band broke with past musical selections by playing two very popular rock-and-roll songs, the first being the 1965 hit "I Got You" by James Brown and the 1978 hit "Y.M.C.A." by the Village People. Both songs were very well received, with many students in the audience doing the YMCA dance.

Following the concert, the 2026 Youth in Philanthropy awards were given out by Avery Fratinger. The Elkhorn Early Learning Centre received \$260 toward the cost of a new chest freezer. The Elkhorn School Phys. Ed. Department got \$1,000 for pickleball and other equipment, and the Elkhorn Figure Skating Club received \$1,596 for a new storage cabinet and teaching aids for the CanSkate program.



Elkhorn School Senior Band.