


Empire-Advance

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APRIL 10, 2026 | EMPIRE: VOL 121 NO 34 / ADVANCE: VOL 140 NO 36 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS



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Virден, Steinbach continue semifinal showdown



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

Virден Oil Capitals and Steinbach Pistons hit the ice on Tuesday, April 7 for game three of the semi-finals.

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virден Oil Capitals are hoping to get back to their winning ways against the Steinbach Pistons in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League semifinals.

In Steinbach, the Oil Caps defeated the host Pistons 6-4 and 8-4 on consecutive nights. Back home on April 7, the Virден squad fell 6-4. They held a 2-1 series lead heading into Game 4 on April 8 in Virден, after the Empire-Advance deadline.

Game 5 between the third-seeded Oil Capitals and second-seeded Pistons is scheduled for April 10 in Steinbach. If necessary, Game 6 will return to Virден on April 12, with a potential Game 7 set for April 14 in Steinbach.

A strong contingent of Oil Capitals fans cheered

on their team to two wins in Steinbach over the weekend. Captain Ty Plaisier, a Virден product, said:

“Having a large group of fans at away games like that is motivating. It was still loud in that arena even when we scored. That support means a lot to the team.”

Virден’s own Bryce Bryant was a force in the first two games of the series. The forward racked up five goals and seven points. He was named the MJHL’s Performer of the Night on back-to-back evenings. Bryant earned the First Star in both contests. He also lit the lamp in game three.

Game Three

Pistons 6, Oil Caps 4

Oil Capitals rookie Dysen Drake, who scored a goal in each of the first two games, said a couple of days before game three that “All the guys are excited to keep our

momentum going heading into game three and four at home and excited to get back in front of our fans.”

The Pistons had a strong start, led 2-1 after the first period, and were up 3-2 and 4-3 in the second session. The Oil Capitals kept battling back and the contest was knotted at 4-4 heading into the third.

Cullen Ingebritson scored for Steinbach 3:19 into the period. Teammate Grady Hoffman added an empty net goal in the final 20 seconds.

Bryant, Cohen Lewko, London Hoilett and Liam Goertzen had Virден’s goals. Oil Capitals goalie Braxton Burdeny made 23 saves.

Easton Thvedt stopped 30 shots for Steinbach. Hoffman had two goals on the night. Besides him and Ingebritson, the Pistons got goals from Sam Noad, Connor Paro-

nuzzi, and Ryan McDonald.

Game Two

Oil Caps 8, Pistons 4

The Oil Capitals built a 3-0 first period lead on the road on April 4 on the way to an 8-4 win. Virден led 3-1 at the first intermission and 5-2 at the second.

Bryant had a hat trick and an assist for Virден. Also scoring for the Oil Caps were Lewko (who had three points), Tyson Ulmer, Drake, Goertzen and Marshall Light. Ulmer, Goertzen, Brooks Siemens, and Colton Worthington each recorded two points. Virден goalie Braxton Burdeny stopped 33 of the 37 shots he faced.

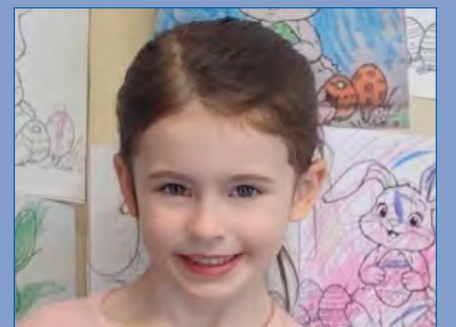
Steinbach’s goals came from Zhenya Miles, Luke Bogart, Connor Paronuzzi, and Liam Doyle. Chris Quizi made 27 saves.

read more about the semi-finals on page 3...



2026 PLAYOFF HOME GAMES
SUNDAY, APRIL 12
VS. STEINBACH
PISTONS
PUCK DROPS AT 7:30PM

Inside...



EASTER CONTEST WINNER *P2*



WHEAT KINGS AT TUNDRA *P8*

Red Apple and Empire-Advance Annual Colouring Contest Winners



PHOTO BY NANCY JO MOLLER



PHOTO BY OLIVER NOLAN

Sloan McPhee wins first place in Easter Contest.

By Jessica Coulter
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

This year's Easter Basket winner for the Annual Easter Colouring Contest in the Empire-Advance, sponsored by the Empire-Advance and Red Apple is 5-year-old Sloan McPhee. Congratulations Sloan on being this year's basket winner! All items in the Easter Basket were graciously donated by the Red Apple in Virden.

This year's Easter Colouring Contest was a huge success and because of that we, at the Empire-Advance, decided to pick a second and third place winner of the contest.

Second place prize goes to 4-year-old Jmike Adand, who receives a \$15 gift certificate to Ice Cream Island, donated by the Empire-Advance!

Third place prize goes to 3-year-old Everleigh Joseph, who receives a \$10 gift certificate to Ice Cream Island, donated by the Empire-Advance.

Thank-you to everyone who entered the Easter Colouring Contest for 2026. We looked forward to seeing the pictures this year and are excited for next year's contest. All the beautifully coloured pictures are on display at the Empire-Advance office.

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Pistons and Oil Capitals will play Game 5 in Steinbach



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

Viriden Oil Capitals and Steinbach Pistons had a heated disagreement at the Pistons net on Tuesday, April 7 at Tundra Oil and Gas Place.

continued from page 1

Game One Oil Caps 6, Pistons 4

The Oil Capitals displayed their offensive prowess with three goals in two minutes to take a 3-0 first period lead on April 3 in Steinbach on their way to the win.

“It was definitely huge for the group’s confidence to get that first win in Steinbach’s barn,” Hoilett said. “I think we had done a good job managing our emotions and excitement prior to that first game. We came out hot and never looked back.”

Bryant scored the first two goals while Siemens had the third. Before the end of the period, Grady Hoffman got the Pistons on the scoreboard.

In the second period, Steinbach’s Sam Noad (shorthanded) and Jackson

Kostiuk (on the powerplay) scored to tie the game at 3-3. Less than a minute after the Pistons tied things up, Drake scored a power play marker to make it 4-3 for Viriden. In the third period, Nate Schaefer and Hoilett (power play) gave the Oil Capitals a 6-3 lead.

Of his key insurance goal, Hoilett said, “We were on a four-on-three power play, so there was a lot of ice to work with. We had created some chances off switches and an attack mentality. I had drifted to my one-timer side. (Nate) Schaefer had the puck and made a slick little fake shot into a pass across the top of

the circles to me. I just tried to get the puck on and off my stick as fast as I could, and fortunately it found the back of the net.”

Doyle scored for Steinbach to make it 6-4. Burdeny made 24 saves. Quizi stopped 35 shots. Bryant and Schaefer each had three points, while Goertzen and Austin Osiowy each recorded two assists.

At the end of the game, the Pistons’ Brett Kaiser received a match penalty for an attempt to injure. The MJHL’s disciplinary report showed he is suspended for three games for an “eye gouge.”

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Wellness Day has two spotlight speakers



Doug Buss.



Christine Cross.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Submitted

By KRISTA PEDERSON

We are looking forward to hosting our third annual Wellness Day next week, Wednesday, April 15th.

If you’ve attended before you’ll remember the excellent speakers we’ve hosted. All of them had something great to share, and we came away from their talks inspired.

Our first year, 2024, we had Connie Newman from Manitoba Association for Seniors Communities from Winnipeg, and Christine Jefferies from Alzheimer’s Society of Manitoba, based in

Brandon.

Last year, 2025, we enjoyed Tim Hague from U-turn, Parkinson’s, and Vicki Russenholt from Lifeline, both from Winnipeg.

This year, we look forward to a couple of great speakers once again. Doug Buss, travelling from Winnipeg, and Christine Cross from Viriden!

Doug Buss

Doug Buss of Your Style Financial, will be speaking at 10:30am, he brings energy and excitement to his work.

He is passionate about helping us plan for our future, with finances in mind.

Just take a look at his website: “We all have goals, whether financial, educational, spiritual or physical. A balance between these goals is what is important – to you, and to me! My purpose is to develop a Personalized Financial Action Plan that lays out your personal objectives so that you can achieve your goals and ultimately, your dreams.” He has over 30 years experience as a financial planner. “My greatest joy,” he says, “is the satisfaction of sharing my expertise with clients in implementing strategies to help them achieve their goals.”

Christine Cross

Christine Cross is our afternoon speaker, at 1:15pm. Christine has had her hand in health-care in our area for many years: 35 years of nursing experience, plus years of advocating in the community. She is currently board chair for SAIL and has become the resident expert in all things aging, from Health Care Directives, Advanced Care Planning, aging in place, end of life and funeral planning. Christine comes with an abundance of experience and knowledge, combined with care for people and a dash of humour.

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- 10 lbs Sirloin Steak
- 12 lbs Beef Round Roast
- 10 lbs Bone In Pork Chops
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- 8 lbs Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breast
- 6 lbs Bacon
- 6 lbs Farmers Sausage
- 6 lbs Pork Back Ribs
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- 25 lbs Lean Ground Beef

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- 4 lbs Bacon
- 4 lbs Wieners OR Smokies
- 10 lbs Lean Ground Beef

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- 2 Racks Pork Back Ribs
- 8 lbs Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breast

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Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



I'm sorry...

Perhaps it goes with the territory: the aging, diminished physical strength, the lapses in the memory, but this week I heard myself apologise for too many things. I needed help with opening a jar, and prefaced my request for assistance with 'I'm sorry but I can't get this stupid thing open'... For what was I really apologising? The stupid jar? My ineptitude? I know I am not inept, old injuries have affected the strength in my thumbs. I tell myself they still have a real purpose— they keep my gloves on!

It's no secret that those longer lighters that we use to light the Christ Candle in our Sunday morning service have proved to frustrate me. More than once I have turned my back to the congregation as I struggle to flick that bic. Most times I can smile it away, appearing okay with my frustrations. This past Sunday, I picked up the lighter and, knowing the procedure, pulled the trigger. And pulled it again. Then looked for help. A kind soul came and gently showed me exactly how to do it, just the way I had tried!!! Handing it back to me, I tried, again, and handed it back to her! My trigger finger could not exert enough pressure to get the job done. Watch, next Sunday that I lead worship service there, they will kindly ensure that I have an authentic candle lighter. And, of course, I said 'I'm sorry.' And, again, sorry for what? Getting old and worn out? It does not portend well for my future.

As part of the family gathering, we play table games. More than once I heard myself quietly apologising, for not catching on to the rules of the game as quickly as I would have liked to. For not always correctly following all the moves and plans of the other players. Like, give myself a break! I'm eighty for goodness sake! You can teach an old dog a new trick, it simply takes longer...

I'm sorry that it takes me longer to get ready and get out of the house than it used to. I'm sorry that it takes more intention and time to prepare a balanced meal. I'm sorry that I don't sleep as well as I want to... man, the list could go on and on.

I hereby resolve to be gentler with myself. Instead of apologising for taking too long, I will thank others for waiting. 'Thank you' sounds so much better than a litany of 'I'm sorry'. To be fair, it is not often said in a whiny voice, no snivelling or grovelling. I simply hear those words too often, too often unnecessarily. I understand that I am not alone in the struggle to accept and adapt to change, especially uninvited and unexpected changes. They are coming. Some of them are already here! I will continue to rejoice in the abilities that have not diminished. My speech, thank God. My thinking— should perhaps have come before speaking? I'm sorry? For the privilege of growing older? May I be ever grateful for the helping hands and loving hearts that surround me. For that I am not sorry!

Wishing and praying for good decisions

From the most ordinary of people, to the highest decision makers in the world, I am wishing and praying for good decisions. God made us all with a free will and, for the most part, the ability to decide what to do and not to do. Everything I have to say today may well apply to myself. As I have said many times, I try not to preach from a righteous pulpit, but write from a desk of observing what would be considered good decisions.

As ordinary citizens, we in Canada have tremendous freedom to make good decisions. Most people, but not all people, have enough money to live better than they do, as many of our financial decisions result in buying things where we could nicely thrive without buying them.

I won't give you my preferred shopping list, you make your own, but when we are short of money, there are almost always better decisions that can and should be made.

When it comes to life choices, we also have options and the same logic applies. Lots of things we are doing are not giving us the results that benefit us or others. Maybe we need to stop doing the less than helpful things.

For cities, towns, and municipal organizations, decisions are a bit more difficult as moving in a certain direction needs strong support from staff and a majority of votes on a council. Agreements must be reached.

Here's some examples of better decisions. Fervently pursuing recycling programs that actually accomplish little or nothing is a waste of money and human resources. Having raw sewage ending up in waterways is inexcusable and must stop. Not having clean drinking water in all our communities, no matter how remote, is a



travesty. In some cases, the facilities have not been built, in other cases the facilities have been badly maintained or even abused. Regardless, the situation requires better decisions by some people at some level, be it local or at a higher level.

At the provincial and national level, we have situations where people have chronically made bad decisions, and by that I mean perpetual criminals or abusers. There is no way on earth we should have "likely to be dangerous or re-offend" notices being necessary. People who habitually re-offend or abuse other people belong in an institution. In my mind, that includes murderers, rapists, drug dealers and drug users who refuse to stop. All of these people are a threat to others and themselves and to keep on playing cops and robbers, a high level game of hide and seek, catch and release amounts to one of the worst decisions we make as a society.

I am firmly against capital punishment, but I am in favour of long term institutionalization.

On the world scene, I have a few suggestions. To Russia's President Putin, grow up and go home. You have done more than a few lifetimes of damage. Quit already! Your country is already too big to successfully manage and you are nearing your life's end, you

don't have much time to amend your ways. Russia is too good a country to be wrecked upon the rocks of one man's ego.

To President Trump, please wake up and figure out that while you have a lot of support for some of your policies, your manners are poor, your ego is huge and your mouth sometimes makes no sense. You too are in your latter years and if you want a strong legacy, you need to smarten up.

To Prime Minister Carney, you are well educated, well trained and I think a smart guy. However, you need to start doing some things and not just muse about doing things. Like many countries, Canada is living way beyond its capacity to pay the bills and, quite frankly, Canadians are noting that a lot of your promises may well be benefitting your company more than the average Canadian.

To Premier Wab Kinew and Opposition Leader Obby Khan, please learn to shut up. For God's sake, we don't care about your cheap shots against each other or against the other parties. All we want you to do is govern and while you are both capable of good decisions, we could surely use a bit more evidence.

May God bless everyone with wisdom, tempered by reality and clear thinking.

Empire Advance
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Animal Control: 204-851-5881

Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440

Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540

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

Flower & Garden Caretaker

The Town of Virден is seeking to employ a self-motivated individual to assist in its annual planting and seasonal maintenance of flowerbeds, planters and hanging baskets throughout town.

Preference will be given to individuals who have graduated from or are enrolled in a recognized green space management course. Individuals with similar experience and training are encouraged to apply. Applicants must hold a valid driver's license.

This position will run from May to September, and will remain open until filled.

Equipment Operator II

The Town of Virден has an opening for a permanent full-time Equipment Operator II position to work primarily in the Public Works Department, although the individual could be required to assist in other departments if necessary.

This position requires an individual that is in good health and capable of carrying out the physical requirements of the job. A valid Class 3 with air Manitoba driver's license is necessary. This position is generally scheduled for 7:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday, but this could vary depending on requirements of the Employer, weather, or other circumstances.

A detailed job description, with wage rate is available at the Town Office.

Please forward resume with cover letter to:

Faye Pope, Office Manager
Town of Virден
Box 310, Virден, MB, R0M 2C0
Email: office.manager@virден.ca

Upcoming Council Meetings

April 14 & 28

Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

Spring Thaw Reminder

As spring approaches, please use extreme caution around creeks, culverts and drainage ditches within the Town of Virден and surrounding areas.

For everyone's safety, please keep children, pets, and yourselves out of danger, and off of thin ice.

Summer Employment Opportunities

Virден Pioneer Museum – Assistant Curator

- Term of Employment: May 4, 2026 – August 31, 2026
- Group Tours for School classes, Daycare Facility and Day Camp Groups
- Update inventory database on computer
- Social Media updates and changes to web site as required
- Provide interactive tours to visitors

Please send resumes to virденpioneermuseum@gmail.com

Deadline for applications: April 15, 2026

Virден Public Swimming Pool

Head Lifeguard/Assistant Head Lifeguard:

- 2-3 years previous Instructor experience plus certifications listed below.

Applications will be accepted until April 30, 2026 at 4:00 PM.

Please include the following along with your resume and cover letter:

- **Copies of all relevant certifications (required)**

Programs/Events Leader & Assistants

The Town of Virден has the following employment opportunities available for the summer of 2026:

Programs/Events Leader – this position, starting July 6, 2026, will be primarily responsible for the coordination of the planning, implementation, operation and evaluation of the Community Day Camp programs for children 5 to 11. Other duties may include planning and assisting with other community programs and events.

Programs/Events Assistants – these three positions, starting July 6, 2026, will be primarily responsible for assisting at the Community Day Camp. Other duties may include assisting with other community programs and events.

The positions listed above will both be subject to 40 hour work weeks, which could include evenings and weekends. The successful applicants must be self-starters, possess exceptional organizational and time management skills and communication skills. The ability to work with children and the general public is imperative. An original Police Information Search (criminal reference check) and Child Abuse registry search will be required prior to the commencement of employment.

Detailed job descriptions are available at the Virден Town Office or on the website at www.virден.ca/p/employment-opportunities.

Resumes will be accepted **until Friday, April 17, 2026** at 4:00 PM.

Please forward resume with cover letter to:

Faye Pope - Office Manager,
Town of Virден
Box 310, Virден, MB, R0M 2C0
Email: office.manager@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
April	1.50%	\$ 15.00
May	1.25%	\$ 12.50
June	1.00%	\$ 10.00
July	0.75%	\$ 7.50

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

HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

Another older cookbook from 1960 is from the Inkerman Women's Association (WA) and Women's Missionary Society (WMS). The WA was first known as the Ladies Aid group and was formed in 1904 from ladies of the Inkerman and Union districts. In 1914 the Inkerman Women's Missionary Society was formed. These two groups of ladies helped play a large part in the life of the Inkerman church and indeed the whole community and beyond. I have been told that both organizations meetings were held on the same day. After one meeting finished the ladies began the other.

Talking with Mary Ellen Clark she reminisced about the Inkerman United church WMS and the WA groups and what they stood for led to many fund-raising teas, suppers and bazars. She wrote, "Every year in June an annual Inkerman church anniversary celebration and supper was held. My grandfather Jim Harper would go into the bush as it was referred to back then. He would gather large white and purple orchids that grew wild. He would bring bouquets of these orchids for the anniversary celebration for the special church service on Sunday in the sanctuary. Grandpa did share the location with my dad Kenneth Harper but was told it wasn't to be shared. He didn't want them to become extinct. We also chuckled about the anniversary supper when the dish pan might have bits of lettuce or whatever floating. No one died or got sick. Oh, the special memories of growing up years ago. Life was simple back then. Such strong community friendships."

Salad dressing

Mrs. R.H. Radford

3/4 cup white sugar	3 eggs
1 cup milk	3 heaping tsp. cornstarch
3 tsp. mustard	1 tsp. salt
butter the size on an egg	

Cook in a double boiler. In the meantime, heat 1 cup of vinegar, then pour in the thickening mixture. Stir well. Put in a sealer and keep the top on. Thin with cream as you use it.

Fudge chiffon cake

Mrs. Ken Harper

Mix and cool:	
3/4 cup boiling water	1/2 cup cocoa
Sift together:	
2 1/2 cups flour	3 tsp. baking powder
1 3/4 cups sugar	1 tsp. salt
Put into a mixing bowl and make a well in the same.	
Add: 1 cup Wesson oil	7 or 8 unbeaten egg yolks
1 tsp. vanilla	1/2 tsp. red food coloring

Add in the cocoa mixture and beat until smooth.

Whip until very, very stiff:

1 cup of egg whites	1/2 tsp. cream of tartar.
---------------------	---------------------------

Do not under beat the egg whites. Gently add the egg whites to the first mixture, fold until just blended with a rubber scrapper. Do not stir. Pour immediately into a 10-inch tube pan 4 inches deep. Bake at 325°F for 55 minutes then 15 minutes more at 350°F. Remove from oven and invert it to cool until cold.

Pineapple squares

Mrs. George Pollock

1/2 cup butter	1/2 cup brown sugar
2 egg yolks	1 tsp. vanilla
1 1/2 cups flour	1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt	1 can of crushed pineapple
1 Tbsp. cornstarch	2 egg whites
1 cup brown sugar	

Cream together the butter and the one half cup of brown sugar. Stir in the egg yolks and vanilla. Mix in the flour, baking powder and salt. Pat into a 9X9 inch pan and bake in a 350°F oven until brown. In a double boiler thicken the pineapple with the cornstarch until thick and clear. Pour over baked mixture. Beat egg whites stiff then add the brown sugar and spread over all and bake until brown about 15 minutes. Nice to serve instead of pie.

Jacomey Cookies

Mrs. H. Howe

2 cups brown sugar	1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup shortening	2 well beaten eggs
1 tsp. vanilla	Pinch of salt
1 cup fine coconut	2 cups sifted flour
2 tsp. baking powder	1/2 tsp. baking soda
2 cups fine oatmeal	

Cream the sugar, butter and shortening. Add the eggs and vanilla. Add the remaining ingredients and roll into little balls pressing down with a fork. Then press one half cherry or a piece of date in the center. Bake in a moderate (350°F) oven.

Police Report

Westman RCMP Service Report for Mar. 29 to Apr 4

Submitted

BY WESTMAN RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 77 calls for service. Some of these calls for service include 38 traffic offences, 5 Assistance to Canadian Agencies/General Public, 1 Assault, 3 Mischief files, 1 Wellbeing Checks, 1 False Alarms, 5 Mental Health, and 1 Fail to Comply with Undertaking. 2 Harassing Communications, 2 Disturbing the Peace and 3 Trespass Act files.

On Mar. 30, during routine patrols in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed the driving speed of 112 km/hr in a 90km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$338.

On Mar. 31, RCMP members attended a residence in the Community of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, while at the residence a 26-year-old male was arrested without incident

on an outstanding warrant from Brandon Police Service, and additionally charged with Failure to Comply with the Condition of an Undertaking as he was not to attend the residence. He was remanded into custody of the province and will attend court later this month.

On Apr. 1, during routine patrols in the RM of Sifton, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed the driving speed of 126 km/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 \$391.

On Apr. 1, during routine patrols in the RM of Pipestone, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed the driving speed of 110 km/hr in a 90km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$312.

On Apr. 3, RCMP were dispatched to a vehicle in the ditch in the Commu-

nity of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. The driver and passenger were standing on the side of the road when members arrived, the driver admitted to being the driver and was showing signs of Impairment by Drug. A blood demand was read and completed. The 54-year-old-male driver was issued a 72 hour license suspension and the vehicle was towed and impounded for 3 days. Charges are pending.

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

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

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If you wish to have an application form and begin the process then contact Kel Smith at kelvonsmith@wcgwave.ca or phone 204-748-3321. He's a member of the Westman Local.

You or a parent must be a Metis Citizen of the Manitoba Metis Federation.

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SPORTS

MINIOTA'S HAWTIN THRIVES AS MIDDLE BLOCKER IN ROOKIE SEASON

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Miniota's Addison Hawtin loved making big blocks last fall for the Dakota College at Bottineau women's volleyball team.

"I like that it gets the team excited and can bring energy if we are down," the daughter of Jon and Deanna Hawtin said.

Although the first-year college student is listed on the North Dakota school team's roster as an outside hitter, the 5-foot-7 athlete was used as a middle blocker. In the final game of the season, Hawtin recorded two solo blocks and one block assist.

"Addy worked really hard on her blocking," Dakota College head coach Valerie Rivera said. "It is not a natural position for her, but she was always asking how she could be better and always willing to take the extra reps in practice to help the team. Addy is a great teammate and her biggest strength was her adaptability."

Rivera praised Hawtin's hard work in the weight room, classroom, and on the court. She also said Hawtin makes teammates laugh. Her mindset and work ethic allowed Hawtin to make the adjustment from high school volleyball to the college level.

"College volleyball is more intense, and you are required to dedicate a lot more time to the sport in order to improve as a team and as an individual," she said.

Throughout her time playing volleyball, Hawtin has had the backing of her family. She said, "My parents have supported my volleyball career by taking me to all the tournaments throughout high school and club and also taking me to different camps in the summers so I can improve in order to progress to the next level."



Miniota's Addison Hawtin.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

In addition to playing volleyball for the Lumberjacks, Hawtin was a member of the school's basketball team. Although a lingering injury prevented Hawtin from competing, head coach Nate Simpson said, "She was every part of a member of our team in a supporting role for us this year."

Hawtin is in Dakota College's health professions program. She would like to become an athletic therapist. Of studying and playing at Dakota College, Hawtin said, "I have enjoyed getting to know new teammates and other students which quickly became friendships."

Miniota News

Submitted
BY LINDA CLARK

The Easter weekend has passed us and I hope everyone enjoyed some family time and treats. As I write this, we await another winter storm. Ah Spring! Where are you?

Congratulations to Rodney and Loree Gardham on the arrival of their second granddaughter, Lila Marie Dawn Williamson, born on March 5 to Curtis and Jessica and big sister Emeline. Grandpa and Grandma have been to Regina to meet this little one.

Congrats to Jake Muir who was one of the lucky recipients to catch a calf at the Manitoba Winter Fair in the calf scramble. This also comes with a cash prize for Jake.

Colby Howard showed a heifer at the Winter Fair and also took part in the clipping, showmanship and confirmation classes. Katie and Blair Howard also enjoyed their week at the fair as 'barn hands.'

Congratulations to Jaxon Sheane and Mason Poppel, members of the U13 AAA Yellowhead Chiefs Spring hockey team, on bringing home the gold at their home tournament in Neepawa this past weekend.

"Keep your eyes on the stars, and your feet on the ground." -Theodore Roosevelt

Our thoughts are with Sherrilyn Stewart and her family on the death of Dennis Stewart, beloved husband, dad and grandpa on March 30 at Shaunavon Sask. Dennis was raised at Miniota. We think also of Dennis's siblings. A graveside service will be held on June 6 at the Lenore Cemetery.

Isabella News

Word has been received of the death of Margaret Littlejohn at Barrie Ont., April 4. Margaret was the youngest child of Bob and Jessie Scarth and raised just north of Isabella. Our thoughts are with her husband Lyle Littlejohn and their family, and also with Catherine and Bob Peel and family on the loss of their sister-in-law and aunt.

New to Virden

The Virden Empire Advance is pleased to announce that in partnership with Rob Waddell (@shoestringpicker on Instagram) we have opened an Art Gallery at the Virden Empire Advance building.

Come in Monday to Friday 9-4 to see our offering of beautifully framed reasonably priced pieces including oils, water colours and prints. We have added a number of antiques, fine china and curiosities!



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SPORTS

WHEAT KINGS FALL JUST SHORT

By Oliver Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

After going down 2-0 in Calgary against the Hitmen, Brandon came back to Manitoba looking to even up the series in hopes to advance to the second round. Games 3 to 5 were set to take place in Virden at the Tundra Oil and Gas Place.

Game 1

In game 1 of the series, Calgary won the game in triple overtime with a final score of 1-0 taking the series lead. Brandon goaltender Filip Ruzicka finished the game with 64 saves on 65 shots. Hitmen goaltender Eric Tu finished with 49 saves on 49 shots securing the shutout for the win. The only goal of the game went to Ethan Moore of the Hitmen. The game ended up being 4 hours and 24 minutes long with the game starting at 19:03 and ending at 23:27.

Game 2

There was no shortage of scoring with 11 total goals scored with the Hitmen taking the game in overtime leading the series over the Wheat Kings 2 games to none going to Manitoba for games 3, 4, and game 5 if needed.

Game 3

The Hitmen opened the scoring late in the first period with a shot barely squeaking by Filip Ruzicka. The next goal was also by the Hitmen late in the second with only 5:23 left in the period. Luckily the Wheat Kings answered quickly, scoring just a minute and 12 seconds later. Keeping themselves in the game they held off the Hitmen till the last 2 minutes of the game. With 2 minutes left the Wheat Kings pull Ruzicka with hopes to score the equalizer and force overtime for the third time. These hopes were quickly put to rest with Calgary scoring just 20 seconds later and taking the game 3-1, now leading the series 3 to none.

Game 4

The Wheat Kings came out the gates strong,



Attention called while anticipation boiling over. A panoramic view of Brandon Wheat Kings playoff game against the Calgary Hitmen played at Virden's Tundra Oil and Gas Place.



Adaptation and rest. New plans ready to fire.

PHOTOS BY OLIVER NOLAN



Tensions high for a defensive zone face-off.

scoring twice in the first period and not giving Calgary any room to make plays in Brandon's end. At the start of the second period the Hitmen scored with a very crucial assist from the official, Adam Forbes. This sadly led to the loss of momentum for the Wheat Kings. Luckily, they set a stalemate for the rest of the second going into the third period with a 2-1 lead. Going into the third there were plenty of chances for both squads. Almost 10 minutes into the third the Hitmen got the equalizer with an assist from Adam Forbes yet again making it 2-2. Shortly after the Hitmen got their third goal with yet another major assist from the official, Bobby Jo Love. Leading the Hitmen to take charge of the game 3-2. As everyone knows history tends to

repeat itself. At the 2-minute mark the Wheat Kings pull Ruzicka to try and equalize the game and force overtime again. Almost as quickly as Game 3 the Hitmen scored just 45 seconds later. This led to the final score being 4-2 for the Calgary Hitmen and winning the series 4 games to none.

Sadly, the Game 4 loss ended the Wheat Kings season short and sent the boys to practice their golf swings. All in all the boys did an incredible job this series and played fairly well through all their games. Hopefully next season they can push past the first round and make it to the Memorial Cup and bring it home. Best of luck to all the boys and for those who are injured we all wish you a quick recovery and hope to see you next season.

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SPORTS

VIRDEN SOFTBALL PLAYERS GROW WITH TC BULLDOGS PROGRAM

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Eleven Virden-area female softball players spent the winter honing skills with the Triple Crown Bulldogs.

The Brandon-based program held practices at the TC Indoor Sports Facility. TC teams competed in various tournaments.

"I enjoyed the process of developing my skill, whether it's my physical ball skills, my mental game, or my ability to talk to people," Virden's Hayley Barkley said. "Playing for the TC Bulldogs for the past two winter seasons has helped me get myself out of my shell, as well as it also improved my love and passion for the game."

Bulldogs coach Faron Asham said, "We are absolutely able to pinpoint and strengthen some weaknesses that every softball player has, especially in the younger groups. It's the ability of the players to gain some softball IQ in certain situations."

All nine Bulldogs graduating players earned opportunities to play at the next level. Virden's Alexa Banga committed to Vermont State University Castleton. Barkley's time with the Bulldogs helped her earn a spot on the U15 AAA Westman Magic.

"I can confidently say that all my teammates and I have improved so much over the span of these years... The practices are structured and they have coaches of all learning styles, and they are all very supportive on and off the field," she said. "All you have to do is show up ready and wanting to play, so the rest will come to you courtesy of the coaches and your personal hard work."

Asham said TC softball teams travelled to Saskatchewan, Las Vegas, Florida, and South Dakota. Barkley said, "I've loved creating a strong bond with my teammates and coaches, meeting new people, and mostly showcasing the skills that I have learned over the winter training with the Bulldogs."

Banga was a catcher for the U18 Bulldogs. Asham said she was the team's on-field and off-field leader.

"She had one of the better performances this season with the power and just the ability to throw out runners and to keep them at bay," he said.

Joelle Barkley won the U16 Bulldogs' Most Improved

Award. Asham said, "She came to a point where she started to turn heads." The coach noted that she is sound in the outfield, knows the game, and does the little things that help teams win.

At the Prairie Pumpkin Classic in Sioux Falls, the U16 Bulldogs won the championship with Virden's Paige Rampton pitching "a game that she'll remember for a long time," Asham said. Although primarily a pitcher, the coach said she has been working hard at playing centre field and "her hitting has come to a point that she's a threat every time she walks up to the plate."

Oak Lake's Mackenzie Masson moved up this year to the U16 level. Asham said she really came on after Christmas. Regarding a tournament in Las Vegas, Asham said Masson "played every inning defensively at first base, which is a little unheard of for a young player stepping up into the next level of the program."

Kaiya Walton of Virden "grew into her own as a catcher this season," Asham said. He praised her late season success for the U16 Bulldogs.

For the U14 team, Hayley Barkley earned the Coaches Award. Asham said the utility player "worked hard all summer and came into the program ready to play."

"She became one of the top players in the U14 program and became a vocal leader," he said.

Virden's Georgia Grieve is a flame-throwing pitcher for the U14 Bulldogs. Asham said, "She's a very athletic softball player, one of the hardest-throwing pitchers in the program, not just in her age group... She was able to harness that velocity a little bit this year and get that strike percentage up to a point that she was able to compete



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The U14 Triple Crown Bulldogs softball team visited the South Dakota USA Softball Hall of Fame while playing a tournament in the Sioux Falls, S.D. area.

every time she took the mound."

For the U14 team, Evie McAdam was a multi-faceted position player. Asham said she "can play shortstop, can catch, can play basically any position you put her at and excel."

Elkhorn's Ava Canart impressed with her growth at the U12 level. She "grew as a pitcher and definitely an on-field presence. Velocity grew leaps and bounds over the season," Asham said.

Fellow Elkhorn product Kaylee Malcolm was strong in the outfield and on the mound for the U12 Bulldogs. Asham called her one of the most athletic players in the program. The coach said as a pitcher she "throws from the left side to give a different look from the circle."

Ava McAdam was one of the top pitchers in the U12 category. Asham said, "We're really excited with the potential that she's got. She throws the ball hard and her mechanics are near flawless at that age. So we're excited to see how she develops once she physically starts growing."

IN MY OPINION - WHAT HAS REFEREEING BECOME?

By Oliver Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

In all honesty after Game 4 of the Brandon Wheat Kings and Calgary Hitmen series (played at Tundra Oil and Gas Place) the Western Hockey League/Canadian Hockey League should focus more on training the officials more as it was highly inconsistent and calls were completely missed when officials were standing 5 feet away with a perfect view of the players. This series and game were absolutely ugly officiating wise. After game 4, even though I am a fan of the Wheat Kings, it seriously made me consider not going to another game. The amount of missed calls and bad calls were simply pathetic.

As I am writing this, I am still unsure if I would want to go to another game purely because of officiating; which in all honesty is a shame, I grew up going to Wheat Kings games with my dad and I never really noticed it as a kid. However, as I've learned more about the game and how it should work, as well as reading through the rule book, each year I've noticed the officiating is just getting worse! I know it is impossible to get every call, I understand that but since covid it has become worse and worse yearly. However, if the WHL and CHL would put more effort and time into training these officials this would lead to better hockey to put it simply. If obvious calls are missed and there is a heavy inconsistency, people will not

want to watch the games as much.

For example, there are less and less Season Ticket holders for almost every club in the WHL each year. A leading reason is because of the missed calls making the game not as fun to watch as it's not as punishing as it should be and players can some nights do whatever they want with zero repercussions.

If the league doesn't decide to work on their officials they should review penalties that are called to make sure they actually get the right call and not just what they see if they don't see the full play. Because I have seen so many examples where a player gets called on something when it was the other team's player who actually should have gotten the penalty. It doesn't always result in a goal but it's still possible! Which in turn would understandably frustrate the team that got called on it, if it does result in a goal. Times like that could be the difference in a game!

An example of this is the Wheat Kings game last week. In Game 4, there was a call made against the Wheat Kings, yes the Wheat Kings player deserved the call, but the official missed the first half of the play, I believe in was Nicholas Johnson who got called on a high-sticking penalty which he definitely did, however, the first half of that play was Johnson taking a high-stick and being interfered with by a hit from behind. Understandably he was shaken up and upset with the official for missing it. A minute

or so later he got called on a high stick against a Hitmen player and got 4 minutes. Which yes was deserved but, in that situation, how did the official right beside him miss what happened to him when the official was looking right at him? Was it because there was no blood?

I just find situations like that make no sense. There was another fan beside me who said "And that is the exact reason why people think officials get paid off by other teams! How is it possible to miss a call directly in front of you?" I know I am not trained to be an official and understand it's a difficult job. How does that happen? To be honest I understood what that fan was getting at because it did not seem possible to miss.

I can understand both sides. I just find it to be interesting how things like that happen and nothing changes or gets looked at, and the players' can't do jack about it, it's simply not fair to the players' of either team. I just think they should focus on making the right call more often, I'm not asking for 100 per cent accuracy but a review and further training would go a long way. At the end of the day I still watch hockey but these situations make it harder for me to want to watch the game I love.

Understandably, the officials cannot see everything all the time but there are simply times and some calls that should absolutely not be missed and are blatant. It's a difficult job at the end of the day.

Life in the slow lane

Childhood Memories

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

By the late 1950's our old barn was getting pretty much run down so plans were made to build a new barn. This was probably the last barn in the area to be built, as more and more cattle shelters were being built so animals were not tied up in the barn. In the spring of 1961, the project began. Ed Gray who farmed north of Oak Lake oversaw the building of the foundation. He carefully measured, then built the forms to hold the cement. After he completed this part of the job it was time for cement. Gravel was hauled and cement purchased to pour into the foundation. There were no cement trucks back at that time in the area. Gravel, cement and water were mixed in a cement mixer and a wheelbarrow, then hauled it to where it was unloaded and returned to be filled up again. Sounds like fun, eh? It was hard work!

Lorne McNiven from Hamiota was hired as the carpenter and oversaw the erection of the barn. When the rafters were made, they were too long and when attached to the barn, it was really high. The decision was made to carry on.

I have said it before and I will say it again, farmers are just the greatest people you could meet. While the barn was built on my dad's property, farmers from all around the community came and helped build the barn. There was lots of nail pounding to be done by hammer, as well as a wee bit of stories with lots of laughs and all round great banter. Pip Lonsdale was a neighbour who came over to help and taught me how to hammer nails. From then on whenever, I met Pip, he called me spike.

We were still milking 9 or 10 cows at that time, but the cows got milked after dark. They were milked in the old barn. The hydro had been disconnected and hooked up



The barn built in 1961 on the Nolan farm near Kenton.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

to the new barn by this time. It was really a cool thing for me, as we used a lantern to see properly. I thought this is what it was like before the days of hydro. My grandparents had done this years earlier.

Finally in the fall of 1961 the barn was finished. We had a bit of snow by that time, as I remember the loft doors had not yet been hung, so some snow had come into the loft.

The first time the milk cows came into the new barn, they did not know where to go or which stall to go into. They trained quickly. After a time or two they knew which was their stall. It never took much to entice the cows, as we fed chop back in the day. After the cows were put in their stall, we milked with lights for the first time since early spring. YEA!

Barns are not built like this any more. There are calving barns and shelters built, but not like where all the animals were put inside for the winter. The new barn was great. In fact, in the winter it would get too hot and the windows

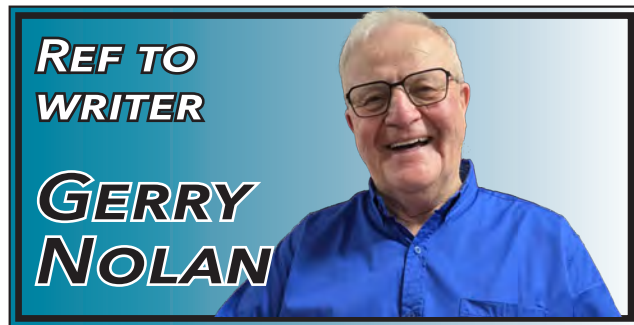
in the barn had to be left open. It was nice to be warm on those cold winter nights, as the old barn had a lot of open ventilation.

I remember all the neighbours who would come and donate their time. I do not think there are too many of them left who came and helped out, but we thank them in our memories again for being such great neighbours and friends.

I said earlier that farmers are just the greatest, helping one another out. That is one thing in my lifetime that I have noticed, farmers helping farmers when in need.

If you see a farmer today, thank them and bless them as they feed the world. Without farmers, the world goes hungry!

REF MEMORIES



The Kenton Cougars Senior Hockey team was formed in 1972. They played in the North Central Hockey League for some 30 plus seasons. The team was composed of players mainly from Kenton and Lenore in the beginning. Later players came to Kenton from Oak Lake, Virden, Reston, Oak River, Brandon and Hamiota to form a team.

The best description of the Kenton Cougars hockey club was that it was a social group who just happened to play hockey in the winter and fastball in the summer.

In the 1974-75 season, the Kenton Cougars defeated the Mc-

Auley Tigers to win the league Championship. Although they played in other final series, this would be the only time they would win the league championship trophy.

Where the Kenton Cougars really shone the most was in the Intermediate Provincial Hockey Championships of Manitoba. The Cougars won a total of 9 Provincial Championships, a number surpassed by no other town that had a senior hockey team and that record, this stands today!

When Craig Whyte came back to Kenton from college and took over Whyte's Lumber

and Insurance, he put a stamp on the Kenton Cougars hockey and ball team. The hockey team was formed. Craig played with the Cougars, coached them, managed them, and lived the Cougars and does so until this very day although the hockey team folded a few years ago. The Kenton Cougar hockey team, really brought the community together with the great fan support they had. Fans followed the team through thick and thin.

As I mentioned earlier, all the Provincial Championships they won, all 9 of them were special, including a 3 year run of winning their division. The Cougars enjoyed playing someone other than league teams, travelling by bus to other towns and had a huge following from the locals who also had a bus trip or two over the years. What happened on the bus, stayed in the bus, except when, do you remember when?

The bus trips and the playoff series they played in against these other teams just seemed to bring out the best in the team. Perhaps travelling together was a huge part of that.

There were 4 gentlemen from Kenton who would travel by car to follow the Cougar Provincial run in the playoffs each spring. The thing was they would leave in the early afternoon to go to an 8 or 8:30pm start for a game whether it was in Holland, Elgin or Glenboro or any other town you could think of. I guess they just did not want to be late and miss getting the best seat in the rink, except the rink was probably not open that early in the day. Can you name the Fab 4 from Kenton?

Next week, I will talk about the Kenton Cougars a little bit more and throw out some names you may remember! Until then, happy trails!

Greg NESBITT
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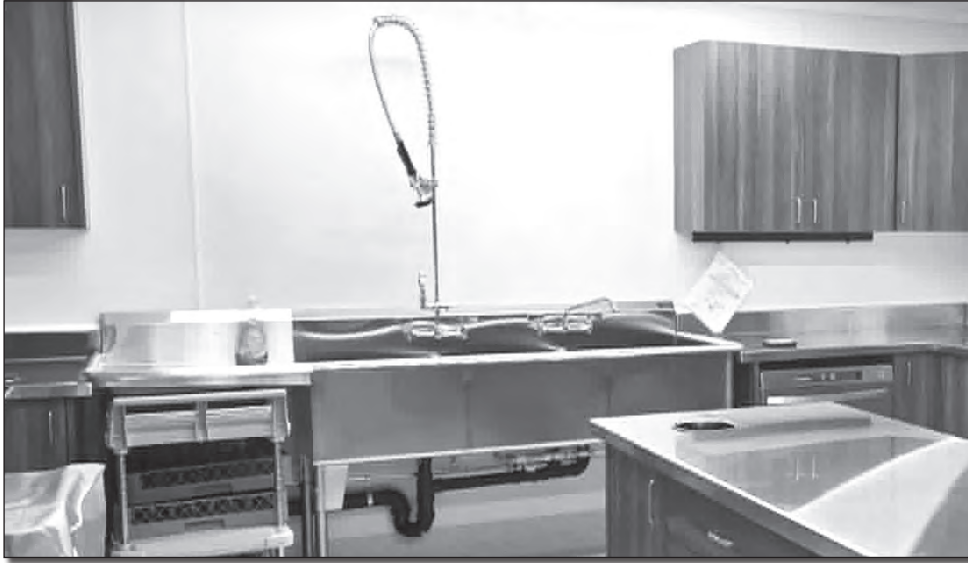
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Brand new kitchen at Kenton Hall



Triple stainless steel commercial sink is going to clean everything quick and easy.



PHOTOS BY CELIA NOLAN

Stainless steel countertops, two ovens, and rangehoods, this Kitchen is ready.

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Kenton Community Enterprise is very excited about the completion of a brand new kitchen

in the Kenton Hall. The project began late last fall and has just recently been completed. As you can see by the pictures, it is very well done, fabulous really! The counter tops are

stainless steel. There is an island in the middle and two big coolers for food and drink.

Local contractors were hired to do the project, another feather in the

cap for local tradesmen doing what they do best. They worked diligently to get the hall back up and running as quickly and efficiently as possible. Job well done guys!

The first time the new kitchen will be put to the

test is the Kenton Firefighters fundraiser which is this coming weekend. It is already a sell-out.

Congratulations to the men and women of the Kenton Community Enterprises who saw the need to move forward and keep

our hall in super shape. I am sure the user groups are going to love the new kitchen. There will be an update on this project in the future so stay tuned. Congratulations Kenton, you have done a first class job again!

MJHL REPORT

MJHL HOCKEY
DEREK HOLTOM

The MJHL final four has had a lot of surprises through the first two games of each series.

The Steinbach-Virden series has the Pistons down 2-0 to the Oil Capitals. After losing Game 1 of their opening series to the Portage Terriers (before rattling off four straight wins to advance), the Steinbach Pistons have lost the first two games of their series against the Virden Oil Capitals in one MJHL semifinal.

The Pistons lost the first game 6-4 – a game which saw they fall behind 3-0, battle back to tie the game 3-3, before allowing three straight goals against once again. Both teams had their special teams cooking in this one – Steinbach scored a short-handed goal and a power-play goal, while Virden scored twice with the man advantage.

In Game 2, Virden followed a similar plan by jumping out to a 3-0 lead in the first, though Steinbach did score late to cut the lead to 3-1. From there the teams traded goals three times through the final 40 minutes before

Virden scored back-to-back-to-back, allowing the Oil Capitals to win 8-4 and take a 2-0 series lead.

Steinbach maybe shouldn't be surprised Virden is more than handling them in this series as they split the season series. As well, the Oil Capitals won the final two games they played in the regular season, plus two more now in the playoffs.

One major reason for the 2-0 series lead is the play of Virden's Bryce Bryant. After scoring eight points in four games against the Neepawa Titans in the first round, Bryant already has seven points in the first two games against the Pistons and now leads the MJHL playoffs with 15 points.

The other series is now a best-of-five series after Wayway earned a 3-1 (EN) victory over the Niverville Saturday night – just their seventh regulation loss all year for the Nighthawks. Niverville, who swept Wayway's cap in the regular season, won the first game by just one goal and that came late in the third period.

With both games essentially one-goal games, and with Niverville being tested like they have never been tested before this season, this has evolved into a fascinating series.

Both goaltenders in this series lead the way in the MJHL statistically so far. Niverville netminder Austin Dubinsky leads all goaltenders with a goals against average of 1.50 and a save percentage of .947. Wayway netminder Jase Wareham leads all goaltenders with a save percentage of .951 and has a goals against average of 1.59. Goals have been hard to come by, as witness by having the top nine scorers in the playoffs coming from Steinbach and Virden.

The MJHL final will be set by next Tuesday at the latest so this should be an exciting week of hockey to keep an eye on.

Another reason for Steinbach's woes is that their second leading scorer will be on the bench for Games 2, 3 and 4 of the MJHL semifinal.

Brett Kaiser was handed a three-game suspension for his eye-gouging major at the end of regulation in Game 1 of Steinbach's series against Virden. That's a big loss for the Pistons, as Kaiser had 13 goals and a team-high 46 assists in the regular season.



Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

Meeting will begin at 5:15 PM
Held via Zoom Video Conferencing

Registration Required:

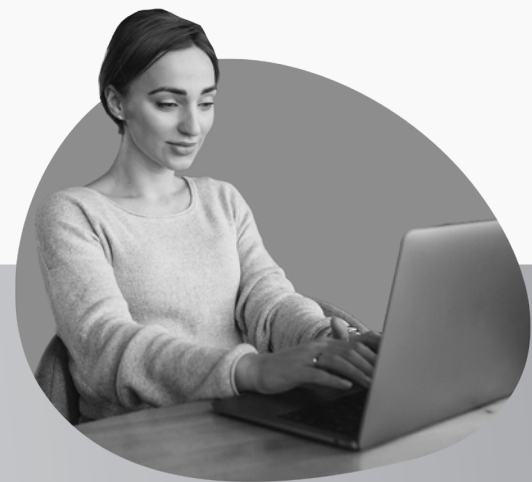
Register online at: sunrisecu.mb.ca

Or register by:

☎ 204-726-3636 ✉ agm@sunrisecu.mb.ca

Registration deadline:

11:59 PM, Sunday, April 19, 2026



Kinew gives taxpayers more debt, no tax relief

Editor's note: This article was originally published in the Winnipeg Free Press. It has been reprinted with permission from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

Manitoba's latest budget did not make life more affordable.

Instead, it covers up tax hikes and piles the cost of government debt on current and future generations of Manitobans.

The government is highlighting its so-called tax relief in the budget.

The government is removing the Retail Sales Tax from a few more grocery items. Most grocery items are already RST free, but the government is extending the exemption to ready-to-eat items like rotisserie chickens. This will save taxpayers \$32 million annually.

The budget is also changing the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit so some homeowners will save on their education property tax bill. However, homeowners with homes valued at more than \$1 million will be paying more.

This is really a bait and switch for taxpayers because those savings are washed out by a sneaky income tax hike called bracket creep.

Last year, the government stopped indexing income tax brackets to inflation. That's a sneaky tax hike called bracket creep. When the government stops indexing tax brackets, it means that inflation can bump taxpayers into a higher bracket and increase their tax bill.

Bracket creep cost taxpayers \$82 million last year.

All the tax relief in this budget will save taxpayers about \$71 million. That means taxpayers are worse off overall. And bracket creep will take more of your money every year because of inflation.

Before finally getting rid of bracket creep in 2024, Nova Scotia had not indexed its tax brackets since 2000. A taxpayer who made \$40,000 in 2000, and only got cost-of-living raises since then, paid about \$1,300 more in taxes in 2023 because of bracket creep. But that's only part of the story because that same taxpayer paid more in taxes because of bracket creep every single year in between.

And despite taking more from taxpayers, the government is still borrowing money this year. The government is increasing the debt by \$3.2 billion compared to last year's budget. By the end of the year, the debt will be \$39.7 billion.

That means every Manitoban's share of the provincial debt will be more than \$26,000 this year.

Debt interest payments will cost taxpayers \$2.4 billion dollars this year and is still the government's third-largest expense behind only health care and education.

That should frustrate taxpayers because the government is taking in record amounts of revenue and still overspending.

Revenues went up \$1.8 billion this year, but instead of paying down the debt or deliver relief for taxpayers, the government is hiking spending by more than \$1.5 billion.

In fact, the Manitoba government is spending more per person than any other province in West-

ern Canada.

The government is projected to spend about \$18,150 per person this year. That's more than the provincial governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

That includes the big spending and borrowing British Columbia government that received a credit rating downgrade because of the reckless borrowing in its budget.

And Manitoba is on the same path to ruin. A credit rating down grade makes it more expensive for the government to borrow money. And for every increase of one per cent in interest rates, the cost of debt interest payments increases by \$60 million.

The government is still promising to balance the budget next year, with a razor-thin \$8 million-surplus. One extra tariff, natural disaster or other unexpected hit to the revenue column can destroy that projection in a flash.

That means if the government doesn't get its spending problem under control, that balanced budget promise is as good as gone.

This government has a spending problem.

Raising taxes to deal with it is the same as taking out another, bigger credit card to pay back your first credit card. It's not a real solution. The only real solution is to find savings and cut spending so the government can start to pay down debt.

Gage Haubrich
Prairie Director
Canadian Taxpayers Federation



PST off all groceries.

From roast chickens to salads, Budget 2026 will take the tax off all groceries in Manitoba starting July 1, to help save you money.

Manitoba.ca/Budget2026



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The start date is as early as May 25. The end date will be on the last week of August. Subject to the successful applicants availability.

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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.

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The Landfill Site Attendant assists the Public Works Superintendent in operating the waste disposal grounds in compliance with the Waste Disposal Ground Operating Permit for the site, municipal policies, and Workplace Health and Safety regulations.

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- Ensure source separation of garbage and recyclables.
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- Assist in transferring or disposing of waste, as required.
- Maintain daily records of waste entering the disposal site.
- Keep all buildings and areas of the landfill site clean and well maintained.
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- Report all concerns to the Public Works Superintendent and Chief Administrative Officer.
- Other duties, as required.
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Mail/Drop-off: R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth Municipal Office
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How reading benefits young brains



FILE PHOTO

Submitted
BY METRO CREATIVE

Reading is a beloved pastime that's having a moment. A number of variables have helped to renew people's interest in reading. BookTok, a popular subcommunity on the social media platform TikTok in which users create videos to recommend and discuss books, is one such variable.

The BookTok trend has helped to spark and revive many people's interest in reading, and that's paid dividends for the bookseller Barnes & Noble, which plans to open 60 new stores in 2026 after opening 30 new stores in 2023, 61 in 2024 and 67 in 2025. Reading more also pays considerable dividends for readers, particularly school-aged book lovers. Research has found that reading has a notable impact on brain development in children.

Reading can foster critical thinking skills. Reading fosters critical thinking skills by engaging readers in a story and encouraging them to ask questions about its characters and plot. The tutoring experts at Readability, who specialize in helping a diverse group of readers in making the shift from learning to read to reading to learn, note that reading helps students assess situations logically and form reasoned opinions.

Reading can help build language skills. Reading helps children build their vocabularies by enabling them to read new words. Reading aloud to children can be especially beneficial for young children, but reading to themselves also encourages kids to learn new words. As children read and learn new words, their language skills expand.

Reading fosters a sense of wonder about the world. The wide range of literary genres, from sci-fi to fantasy to history, can instill in children a sense of curiosity and wonder about the world they live in. That can spark interest in other subjects at school, including science, mathematics and art.

Reading can benefit youngsters' attention spans. Modern children are inundated with stimuli that does not necessarily foster longer attention spans. Social media videos and even some children's television programming may have an adverse effect on kids' ability to build a strong attention span. Reading helps kids to strengthen their focus by requiring them to concentrate on a narrative and process information as the story unfolds. That requires kids to maintain their attention for far longer than the average social media video.

Reading has a profound impact on the development of young children's brains. That makes it both an enjoyable and effective pastime.

'No parent should have to worry about their child encountering drug use'

M.P. Dan Mazier moves to block drug consumption sites near schools

By VEA Staff
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

(Apr. 6, 2026)

Our local Member of Parliament is looking to ban drug consumption sites near children. Last week, Dan Mazier introduced Bill C-272 in an effort to prohibit supervised drug consumption sites from operating within 500 metres of schools, daycares, and playgrounds.

The bill, if passed, would amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and apply to both federally approved sites and those established under broader provincial exemptions. This includes a proposed site in Winnipeg currently being pursued by Manitoba's provincial government.

The legislation was tabled in the House of Commons as part of Mazier's role as the Official Opposition's Shadow Minister for Health. In a media release discussing the legislation, Mazier cited concerns about child safety and community impact.

"Allowing drug consumption sites next to children is dangerous and unacceptable," Mazier said. "No parent should have to worry about their child encountering drug use or discarded needles on the way to school."

Mazier also referred to these sites as "drug magnets," citing hundreds of reports to Health Canada with concerns relating to drug dealing, property damage, aggression, and the littering of drug paraphernalia.

Supervised consumption sites currently operate under exemptions granted by the federal Minister of Health. It allows individuals to use certain substances under medical supervision. Data from Health Canada indicates fentanyl is the most commonly used substance at these sites.

Mazier has been critical of the federal government's approval process, arguing that insufficient attention has been paid to proximity to sensitive areas. At a press conference on Parliament Hill, Mazier highlighted what he described as real-world consequences. The M.P. referenced Ottawa's Sandy Hill Child Care Centre, which was forced to close in 2023 after a supervised consumption site opened blocks away. The daycare documented a significant increase in open drug use and nearby aggression before its closure.

Mazier also cited a 2025 letter from the Ottawa Police Chief requesting that consumption sites be relocated away from schools and daycares. Despite the request, the federal government approved the renewal of a site later that year.

A little closer to home, Manitoba's NDP government has been pursuing a supervised consumption site in Winnipeg through the provincial class exemption mechanism. Mazier says he is watching the spread of drug enablement policies across the province



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Riding Mountain M.P. Dan Mazier speaks with media during his announcement of Bill C-272, which would prohibit drug consumption sites near schools and daycares.

and country with growing concern. He fears it is only a matter of time before advocates begin pushing for supervised consumption sites in rural communities.

Despite his broader concerns, Mazier did acknowledge that the bill represents a limited step. He said more sweeping changes would be unlikely to pass in the current minority Parliament. "The focus of this bill is protecting children," Mazier said. "I am hopeful that Members of Parliament from all parties will support it." The legislation is expected to be debated in the coming months.



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