

Empire-Advance

serving virden & area since 1885

JANUARY 9, 2026 | EMPIRE: VOL 121 NO 21 / ADVANCE: VOL 140 NO 23 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS



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TUESDAY
EVERY DAY

ALL
JANUARY
LONG



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GOURMET
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PLUS a \$50 bonus deposit!

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Skate Virden Fun Skate event a great show

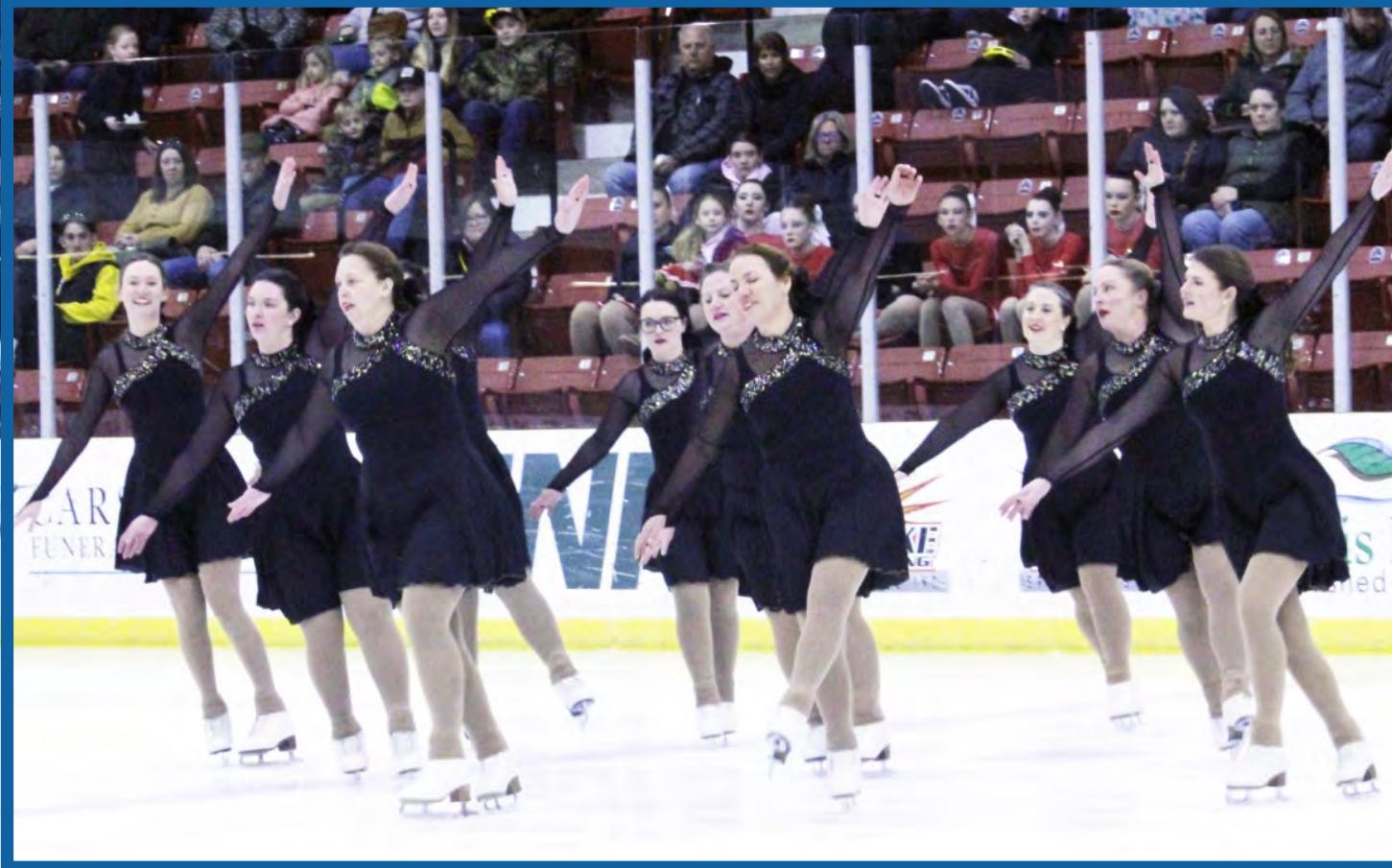


PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Adult II Virden Velocity synchro group swings across the ice with ease. Registered Skate Virden Adult II competitors include (alphabetically): Abby Jones, Ashley Mitchell, Cindy Horrigan, Jill Warkentin, Kally Bodin, Leah Hume, Llinois McConnell, Lynice Holmstrom, Madelyn Taylor, Michelle Leslie, Rebecca Reddaway and Stacy Jamieson.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Hours, months, years, of gritty practice, bumps on the ice, cold mornings, thrills and disappointments pave the path to figure skating performances seen yearly as hosted by Skate Virden.

Tundra Oil & Gas Place buzzed with activity over the Jan. 2-4 weekend as figure skaters from Saskatchewan and from clubs across Manitoba competed in Skate Virden's annual FunSkate competition. This fun-filled weekend competition held events for the youngest CanSkaters and StarSkate and on to Adult

Gold, Creative Improv, Artistic and Synchronized Skating.

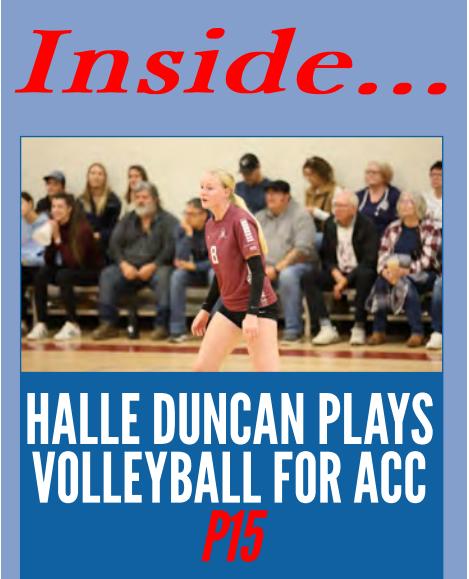
Costumes, makeup, chin-up smiles—all put to fantastic performance music on a gleaming ice surface - quite a show.

President of Skate Virden Club, Matthew Russell was thrilled with this year's event both for Skate Virden skaters and for the event as a whole. It's an event that drew Clubs from as far as Indian Head and Pense, Sask. and Notre Dame de Lourdes/Winnipeg and the Interlake. Over 300 skaters in all, along with the about 50 coaches, judges and volunteers means a major event for Virden.

read more about the show on page 2...



HOME GAME
SUNDAY, JANUARY 11
VS. PORTAGE
TERRIERS
PUCK DROPS AT 7:00PM



**HALLE DUNCAN PLAYS
VOLLEYBALL FOR ACC
P15**



**SANHEIM'S OLYMPIC
DREAM BECOMES
REALITY P16**

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4X4 WINTER EVENT

300 Frontage Rd, Virden ~ 204-748-3396 ~ www.virdendodge.ca



Was: \$67,785
Savings: -\$9,250

Now: \$58,535



Now: \$37,390

2026
Jeep
Compass Sport

Winter vibes, icy glides: Snow doubt they are having fun



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

All the way from central Manitoba, Notre Dame Silhouettes Adult I synchro performed to dynamic music in TOGP, Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026.

continued from page 1

Brandon registered some 29 skaters including 15 adults. Melita brought 14, Rivers 12, and nine from neighbouring Elkhorn along with so many other communities.

Russell was proud of Virden club's dedication and talent and said: "Our club performed incredibly well and had a very strong showing at the event. We had a number of young skaters performing their solo performances for the first time."

The events showcase the work of Virden's strong coaching staff: Patricia Hole, Cindy Mahoney, Katy Soroka, Meghan McKinnon, Shaelyn Olafson and Amanda Scott,

While marks are not listed, FunSkate is an important yearly event for the skaters. "Some of our junior skaters who are moving up the ranks such as Jovie Kenderdine (Gold) and Lochlynn Hayward (Silver) both made the podium after their solo performances in their respective events. We also have a number of high-end skaters who really showcased what our club has to offer in terms of our coaching and training," Russell explained.

An up-and-coming young skater with the Virden Club, Nate Greenbank, will be skating at

the Canadian Nationals in early February. He said Nate "had another strong showing at the competition and continues to impress crowds."

One of the high points of the weekend performances was synchronized skating. Like a flock of birds, the showy teamwork is inspiring.

Russell reflected on the events and said, "The star of the show in my mind was the seven synchronized skating teams. No one brings life to a building like a synchro team so when you have seven [teams] all under one roof it makes for an exciting afternoon. The two Virden teams both skated extremely well; the young Star 4 team started off the event by captivating the crowd with their skating and cuteness as did the Rivers team in the same flight."

Rivers was awarded top marks for the class.

Adult synchro included: Summit Synchro Stony Mountain club, Wheat City ConnXion, Notre Dame Silhouettes, U of M Ice Intrepid, and Virden Velocity.

"The Virden adult synchro team really got the crowd going and did a phenomenal job at their performance," noted Russell.

He told of an incident where camaraderie shone through. He said, "The synchro event also brought us a moment

of shear sportsmanship. While one of the Virden skaters with the adult synchro team was on the ice for their team warmup, she noticed she had a damaged skate. Word...

spread quickly off ice where the other teams were waiting their turn. Once the right size was located, a skater from a rival club took her skate off and [loaned it] to the Virden skater so that they (Virden) could still compete. This was a lovely moment in what is normally such a competitive environment, and really highlighted why we were all there - for a fun skate."

The entire Skate Virden board pitches in to make this event succeed. Along with Russell, they include: Victoria Tutthill, Ashley Nugent, Wendy McAdam, Hayleigh Hayward, Jill Warkentin and Shaelyn Olafson. Deanna Langlois and Llinos McConnell are members at large.

In order to prepare for FunSkate that comes on the heels of the busy holiday season, there's a ton of planning, hard work, commitment and volunteer hours in the months leading up to the event.

Russell concludes, "Our board deserves a big pat on the back for the hard work they put into this weekend, they should be extremely proud of the 2026 FunSkate Competition!"

Skating judge and coach waltz the ice



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Meghan McKinnon and Eric McRae dance the Keats Foxtrot during Saturday afternoon's FunSkate event in an exhibition performance.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

but she grins and says, "It's very easy to do that when you're 12, and it's very difficult to do that when you're 42."

McKinnon's partner in this ice waltz was Eric McRae a former student of hers who is now a skating competition judge.

The compelling teamwork reflected their ongoing association in the skating world. McKinnon says, "When [Eric] graduated high school, we skated on the same single team for about a decade."

The audience cheered their performance, an inspiring dance!

With fan roses in hand the skating partners are exhilarated following their exhibition dance at Skate Virden's FunSkate.

"That was a big effort, I tell you," Skate Virden coach Meghan McKinnon said off ice. But by their countenances, the duo relished the experience.

Gliding the ice, costume flowing in the wind, it actually looked effortless,

Firehall funding generates hope and excitement

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Anyone who has visited Virden's Wallace-District Fire Department firehall knows it has become a weak link in WDFD's infrastructure. Now however, WDFD has received a long-awaited answer to their call for funding of a new firehall.

Based on a \$3M budget, a \$1.5M grant for the firehall upgrade has been announced by Manitoba GRO fund.

Virden mayor, Tina Williams now has assurance that this major town service can continue to keep pace with Virden's needs. She said, "Without a fully functioning, well equipped firehall that provides a safe and healthy workplace for our volunteer firefighters, the Town would be unable to provide security and healthy living for our residents and businesses, along with their properties, including those in the surrounding regions."

Williams is not the first mayor to grapple with this need. She said, "This project has been in the works for several years. It is very rewarding to see it finally becoming a reality, thanks in part to the matching funding from the Province of Manitoba."

No one knows better than firefighters just what this

will mean for Virden and area. Virden chief, Cory Nixon stated, "It is very gratifying for myself and the membership of Station 1, to receive a new building knowing that the Council of the Town of Virden is looking into the future, and looking after the safety of their first responders."

The fire board and fire department have been proactive for years, fundraising and keeping major and smaller equipment updated. Meanwhile the hall has become well worn, and of late, the big push has been for government financing to do what needed to be done.

Mayor Tina Williams, Station 1 Fire Chief Cory Nixon and Virden's CEO Rhonda Stewart provided information on the project:

"Station 1 was built in 1977 and has served the fire services and our communities well over the past 46 plus years but is now becoming too small to house the equipment and apparatus required for proper response. It has become unsafe for our first responders with it being overcrowded, with turnout gear being stored in the same room as the apparatus, exposing it to diesel fumes/carcinogens."

"The hall is also starting to see signs of fatigue, primarily with the concrete floor and the sewer pit breaking away and collapsing. The windows are not weather resistant, and the building is not properly insulated, causing energy inefficiencies."

"The interior finishing, flooring, doors and fixtures are worn out and at end of life."

The newest truck, for example, is too large for the current elevation of the concrete floor putting it dangerously close to the top of the doors when entering and exiting the hall.

2013 Committee formed

Council and the fire department started the planning for an addition/renovation on the existing hall in 2013 when a committee was created to investigate addition/renovation/relocation options for Station 1.

The Committee recommended that an addition of a new apparatus bay onto the existing hall, with renovations to the existing hall, provided the best option to provide room for current and new apparatus, as the size and types of equipment continue to increase. Most

importantly, it would provide a safe workplace for the volunteer firefighters.

Location

The location of the existing hall provides for the most rapid, safe response both to the hall as well as the most rapid, safe response from the hall in any direction, whether attending a scene within Virden or out to the many municipalities they respond to.

Plans are for a 65-foot by 80-foot addition onto the rear of the existing hall, which will house the main apparatus (fire trucks) with renovations to the existing hall to follow. The plan is to have the addition completed first so the trucks can be moved to that part of the hall, with renovation completed following that.

Funds underway

Grants were applied for in 2023, 2024 and 2025 as Council recognized the urgency of this project. Fortunately, in late 2025, the Town was able to secure the 50 per cent funding from the Province of Manitoba GRO Fund for the firehall project.

The Town has already allocated funds to the Replacement Reserve Fund over the past several years in preparation to meet Virden's 50 per cent cost share. With provincial funds approved, the Town expects to receive a portion of that in the next few weeks.

Municipal service

Communities help each other out when fire or accidents strike and operating costs for the firehall will still be covered by the Wallace District Fire Board.

The shortage of volunteer firefighters has become a national problem. People are no longer wishing to risk their health and safety for their communities unless their communities are willing to provide them with proper training, equipment and facilities to keep them healthy and safe while they are keeping the communities safe.

Chief Nixon said, "By providing us with this facility, it will assist in both recruitment and retention efforts in maintaining our firefighter membership while ensuring state-of-the-art operations, that can respond to the growing needs of our community."

Water survey draws limited response

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Town of Virden reached out to residents to gauge interest in a public meeting over the water quality since the change to a former aquifer source.

While their survey canvass was widespread online (website and FB), with paper copies at seniors' complexes, in the library, and town office, only 104 were returned.

The Town posted results from the Office of Drinking Water letting Virden residents know the water on tap, Virden's water that's freely available for drinking, cooking and washing, carries over twice the arsenic levels that the Manitoba guidelines state as safe.

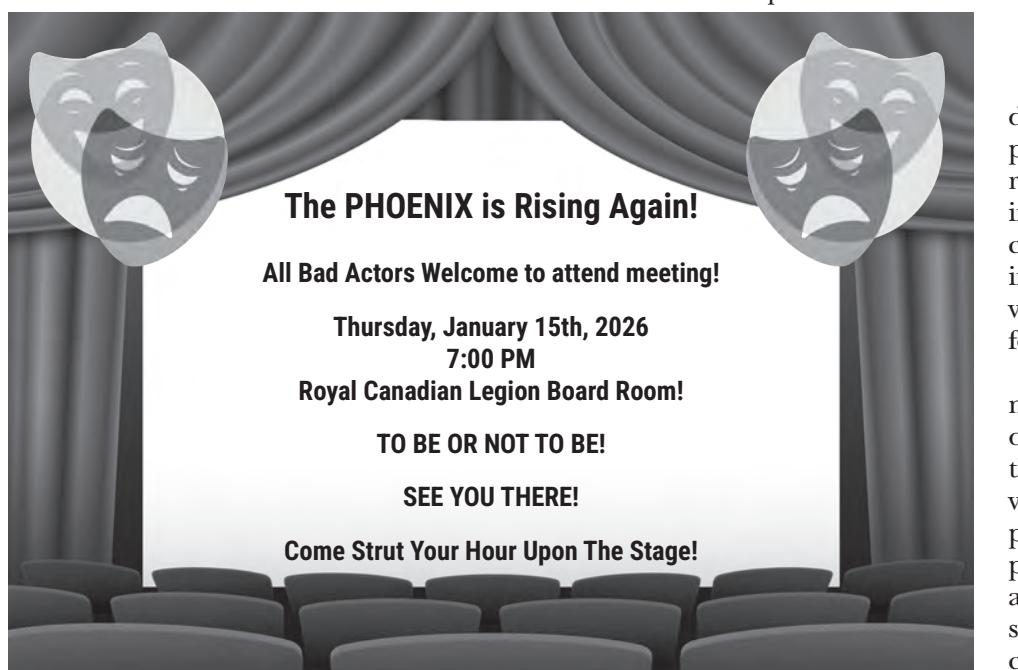
Since the Town switched to an abundant water source following a supply crisis, testing has shown arsenic levels range from 0.0243 to 0.0256 milligrams per litre (mg/L). The Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guideline is 0.010 mg/L.

Town staff are tabulating the responses. "Administration will be obtaining answers to the questions from the appropriate government agency or authority, where available," says CAO Rhonda Stewart.

The answers will be made public in print, on the Town website and on Facebook.

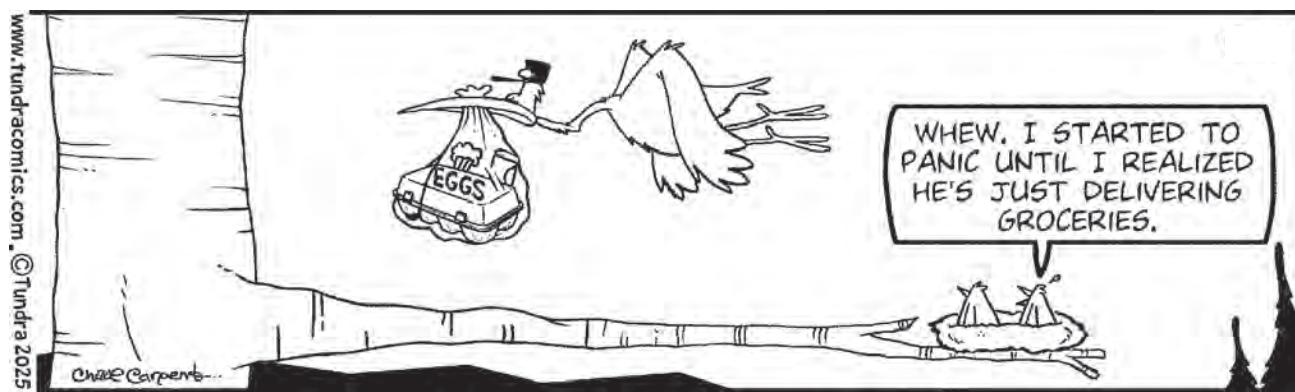
But more to the point, Virden is working to reduce arsenic within the water. Stewart says, "In the meantime, the submission for the alteration to the water treatment system to improve the treatment of arsenic, has been approved by the Office of Drinking Water."

The plan is for immediate remediation. "Once the alterations are completed, hopefully in the next two to three weeks, the Town will be doing another round of testing for arsenic, with the goal to reduce that amount in the drinking water to the regulatory limit. The Town will continue to advise the citizens and Office of Drinking Water of the status of those works and the test results."



Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



We know who holds the future

Special dates are important markers as we measure our life and progress.

Fifty-five years ago this week, my wife Christine (nee Lobel of Scarth, Manitoba) and I, along with our eight month old son moved out of Winnipeg for the second time in a year. I was raised on a farm north-west of Holland, Manitoba and Christine on a farm at Scarth, just south of Virden. We met, through mutual friends in Winnipeg, I guess that's a common story for many people.

So we attended university, worked at summer and part-time jobs, managed the university newspaper, got married and had a baby. By graduation time in the Spring of 1970, there were a few odd jobs in Winnipeg before moving out to western Manitoba working at a couple of jobs and then back to Winnipeg for a research job at University of Manitoba. In early January, 1971, I started as Assistant Agrep in Neepawa, hence the second move out of Winnipeg in one year.

A lot of water has flowed down the Whitemud, Little Saskatchewan and the Assiniboine rivers in those 55 years.

Our family has grown to two sons, a daughter-in-law, four grandchildren, two grandsons-in-law and four great grandsons. On the business, community and politics side, our life has included over nine years as an Agrep with the Department of Agriculture, several years farming and 20 years of auctioneering. It has also included a few elections, two terms as mayor of Neepawa and now nearly 40 years of accumulated newspaper work. I chuckle inside when I see the look on peoples' faces when I say my first publication was in 1966. By the way, that was 60 years ago.

RIGHT IN THE CENTRE
KEN WADDELL



“ Actually there is one major difference now from 1971 and that is we know that God holds our tomorrow. ”

Fifty-five years is a long time. We have made 1,000s of friends, acquaintances and customers across Manitoba, Canada and some into the United States. We have tried our best to serve wherever we can, be it in our towns, our businesses and churches.

We are thankful for all the people we have met, even the few who aren't sure about whether they like us or not.

This week is also the second anniversary of Christine's very serious cancer surgery. Both Christine and I have had the privilege of receiving very good health care and especially with Christine, it was severe and life threatening. Over the years, the medical system has either improved or saved our lives on a few occasions. I don't want to miss anyone or draw unwanted attention to them, but I

would be happy to state tribute privately about some amazing medical people to anyone.

So as we launch into a New Year, we don't know what the future will bring, in much the same we didn't know what the future would hold in January 1971. Actually there is one major difference now from 1971 and that is we know that God holds our tomorrow. We may have known that somewhat in 1971 but we know it with assurance in 2026.

My God bless you and yours!

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

HOMEBOODIES

RITA FRIESEN



Looking back...

As is my custom, at the end of the year I review the highlights; family times, personal growth, adventure...2025 did not disappoint me, for which I give thanks.

So many images crowd into memory review. One that is framed with smiles is the Sunday afternoon I was blessed with the company of three granddaughters, their accumulated flock of eight children ages ten and down, and my favourite daughter-in-law. We had dined with relative ease in a local restaurant and we all had time to play before heading home. Riverbend Park won the vote. It had been a week of heavy rain and lovely puddles called an invitation. After checking with the grands, I invited the great grands to remove shoes and socks and come puddling. That image, barefooted in deep puddles, surrounded by my littles, that image brings such joy and satisfaction. A halo day.

Travels this year included a blessed stay on the Isle of Iona: ten days of raw beauty, deepening faith roots and shared laughter with a close friend. It was my second time to the wee small isle and please, dear God, not my last. My breathing slows, my heart and spirit open, my eyes capture the views, and my spirit captures the presence of the Divine. Time in Belfast and Dublin certainly expanded my world knowledge; the beauty and the history of the country are amazing. One need not travel far to be refreshed. Camp Morton, just outside of Gimli is a hidden gem. I was so moved and inspired by the site that my sister and I returned, out of tourist season, to simply rest our souls and spirits on the shores of the mighty Lake Winnipeg. This longing to return I understand a bit better - my earliest summer camp memories are warm and comforting, filled with the company of cousins - regular time at the Canadian Sunday School Mission camps, now known as One Hope Ministries. Trees, wind, water, sunshine...perfection.

This summer had a family bonus; my nephew and his family from Australia joined the family to celebrate the marriage of one of his cousins, also my nephew. His mother, my sister, joined us and a wonderful custom around her time in the province is the gathering of the cousins and two remaining aunts. Cousins, the ones that played together on the grandparents farm, the ones that share hairlines, and creases, and laughter; we're all old! Our time together is precious, a review of childhood, yes, but an exchange of thoughts, family history and discussions on the reality of aging! Following the gathering of the clan, we spent time with one on one visits with other family members, speaking freely, sharing deeply.

A day trip with my younger sister included a stop at the Rosefarm Cemetery, a well kept, well loved, almost unmarked cemetery, the resting place of so many family and friends. My Uncle Bill, farm accident at the age of 14 or 15...the rascal in the family whose loss took the laughter from our grandmother forever. Maternal grandparents, sets of aunts and uncles, some cousins... Time spent there moves slowly.

I am well. It is well with my soul. No better way to conclude one year and embrace another.

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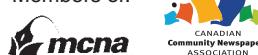
Canada

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Minota News

Submitted
By LINDA CLARK

Happy New Year to all our readers, near and far!

Several from this area attended the Decker Hutterian Friends and Neighbours evening on Dec. 27. A wonderful musical program began with the nativity musical, followed by a delicious supper, and then wonderful music from five choirs. If you have never attended this evening, please consider it as it is a wonderful evening based on our faith and the birth of Christ. Thank you to the colony families for their hospitality to all.

Town Office: 204-748-2440

Virden Landfill: 204-748-6033

Tundra Oil & Gas Place: 204-748-2736



The Minota Family bonspiel was held on Dec. 27 with 18 rinks participating. Great to see so many youths out curling! Winner of the bonspiel was the Bob Gardham rink, 2nd Jason McKenzie rink, and 3rd went to the Tyler Strachan family rink.

Hats off to the Elkhorn community for their beautiful display of ice candles at their Elkhorn cemetery, along with wreaths and a gorgeous lit tree. What a sense of peace to see all these lights at the headstones of loved ones. Thank you for this beautiful tribute.

Our community has received many compliments on our Christmas lights. Hats off to all for their decorating and Christmas spirit!

"The magic in new beginnings is truly the most powerful of them all." -Josiyah Marlin

Isabella News

Our sympathy is extended to Ryan and Janice Norrie and their sons on the death of Janice's dad, Barry Green.

Our thoughts are also with the Doupe family on the loss of their mother and grandmother Vel Doupe on Dec. 24.

A warm welcome home to Kendall and Angie Heise, following a lengthy stay for Kendall at the Winnipeg Health Science Centre. We have been thinking of you.

Hazel Wall led worship on Christmas Eve in our Isabella Community Church, and Julie Clark Halipchuk sang our anthem. Silent Night with candles lit is always a highlight of this service. The church was tastefully decorated by a group of volunteers. It was good to be home in our church with family and friends.

Animal Control: 204-851-5881

Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440

Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540

Caboose Restoration Fundraiser

CP Station Prints

All aboard! Now you can own a piece of Virden's history while fueling fundraising efforts for **restoration for the Caboose at the Historic CP Station**.

Unframed prints by renowned Canadian artist William Hobbs are available for only \$30 each at the Town Office - while quantities last.

Want to support the restoration event more? Donations are welcome - tax receipts will be provided.

Don't miss your chance, before these prints leave the station for good.

Thank you!

Council appreciates everyone who took the time to complete our Public Engagement Survey regarding the Town of Virden Water System. Additional updates will be provided in the coming weeks.

2026 Garbage and Recycle Schedules

Available online at www.virden.ca/p/garbage-recycle or at the Town Office

Next Council Meeting

January 20 and February 3

Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

Employment Opportunity General Labourer I (full-time/part-time)

The Town of Virden has openings for one full-time or two part-time **General Labourer I** positions to work primarily in the Parks and Recreation Department at Tundra Oil and Gas Place.

This position requires an individual that is in good health and capable of carrying out the physical requirements of the job. Shifts are primarily scheduled for evening and weekends so would be ideal for a student. A valid Class 5 Manitoba driver's license is necessary.

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

This position will be open until filled.

Please forward resumes, complete with covering letter to:

Faye Pope, Office Manager

Box 310

Virden, Manitoba, R0M 2C0

Phone: (204) 748-2440

Email: office.manager@virden.ca

Snow Removal from Private Property

All snow removed from private driveways, or approaches to Town of Virden streets shall be piled on the boulevard or private property so as not to impede travel along streets.

Shoveling or snow blowing of sidewalks shall be done in a manner as not to place any of the materials onto the street, but rather onto the boulevard adjacent to the sidewalk or private property.

If anyone chooses to clean along the street, the snow shall be removed onto the boulevard or onto private property.

No piling of snow will be allowed within 4.6 metres or 15 feet of any intersection so as not to impair the view of traffic at the intersection.

Dog and Cat Licenses

2026 animal licenses are available for purchase at the Town Office.

License your pet today – if your pet is lost, a valid license will help us to make sure that it is returned safely to you.



Tax Prepayment Discounts

The Town of Virden offers tax prepayment discounts as outlined below to taxpayers wishing to pay an installment or installments on their 2026 property taxes. Those wishing to prepay may pay an amount or a series of amounts that in total does not exceed the amount of their 2025 property taxes. The discount rate is equivalent to an effective annual interest rate of 3%.

Month of Payment	Discount Rate	Savings on \$1000.00
March	1.75%	\$ 17.50
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.

Public Programming at TOGP

Sticks & Pucks, Public Skating, Parents/Grandparents & Tots and Noon Hour Shinny are all up and running at Tundra Oil and Gas Place.

Please follow "Town of Virden – Parks & Recreation" on Facebook, or check out our facility schedule anytime at www.virden.ca

See you at the rink!

RM Approves 2026 Interim Budget, Firefighter Pay Update

Wallace-Woodworth council Dec. 18

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Woodworth Fire Department wages

Firefighter wages have remained unchanged since the previous policy adopted in 2017. Council approved a resolution authorizing retroactive pay to account for the wage difference

Elkhorn Lagoon

Council approved the purchase of land to accommodate Elkhorn lagoon expansion at a price of \$33,880. Reeve Clayton Canart expressed appreciation to land-owner Brad Martin for his cooperation in facilitating a project important to the municipality

Emergency Plan

Council passed a resolution supporting the emergency plan prepared by the Westman Emergency Group. The plan has been updated to reflect current municipal staff and equipment

Medical Exempt Lane Plowing

Council approved a request from a ratepayer for medical-related snow plowing

Council Orientation

Council requested assistance from the provincial Department of Municipal and Northern Relations. A resolution to invite a municipal services officer to conduct a council orientation focusing on municipal roles, governance, and municipal finance was approved

2026 Interim Budget

Council formally approved the 2026 interim budget for the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, set at a total of \$5,555,000.

GRO fund application

Council was informed that results from the Manitoba GRO fund had been released and that the RM's application for funding toward a Woodworth Fire Department pumper truck had been unsuccessful

Kenton LUD report

Coun. Diana MacDonald reported that the LUD committee discussed picnic tables that had been ordered, with follow-up underway to see if they could be paid for before year-end. A vaccine clinic for pets will be held at the fire department on March 24 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Elkhorn LUD report

Coun. Denis Lachapelle explained that the LUD will review proposed upgrades including the installation of electric doors at both the exterior and interior of the post office. Preliminary pricing was estimated at just over \$6,000. He noted that there are sufficient funds remaining in the Canada Post building reserve that could potentially cover the cost of these improvements

Committee Reports

Coun. Barb Stambuski summarized the veterinary board meeting held on December 10. The board completed payment of maintenance and repairs totaling just over \$30,000. Veterinary service fees were adjusted, with the local \$6 fee remaining unchanged, while fees for users outside the service area were doubled to \$12.

Coun. Mark Humphries raised a concern on behalf of a local ratepayer who had experienced difficulty accessing emer-

gency veterinary services for a sick horse. Councillor Stambuski responded that she did not have answers but encouraged the ratepayer to submit a formal letter to the veterinary board.

Councillor Stambuski continued her report with updates from the Inspire Kola and Trans Canada West planning discussions. She advised that Wallace-Woodworth had received approval for two subdivisions, bringing the RM's year-to-date total to three permits. The total assessed value of those permits was approximately \$3.7 million, generating \$16,675 in permit fees

1,151 head of cattle had been booked for the Kirkella pasture in 2025 but only 964 were actually received. Despite this, patrons paid for their full booked numbers. One patron added cattle later in the season, bringing in 356 head

With some cattle now being transported directly out of province, brand inspections are required on removal days. It was also confirmed that pasture fees will remain unchanged.

Coun. Mark Humphries reported that concerns about the library renovations were a result of a lack of communication from the engineer, designer, and project management team. One issue involved a 250-square-foot correction to the drawings, which raised questions about how the change affected project pricing, why no corresponding price adjustment had been communicated, and why there were no on-site project management meetings or formal change orders.

Councillor Caldwell informed council that the current Prairie Gateway Tourism balance was reported at \$6,798.31, with a \$1,500 Youth Canada grant still outstanding and approximately \$1,000 in expected upcoming expenses

Cemetery Road Bridge

The Cemetery Road bridge is now open and operational. The only remaining work is asphalt paving, which will be completed in the spring.

Council approved progress payment number four to Samson Developments of \$94,064.05

Kola Landfill

The tender from the KGS Group for phases one, two, and three of the landfill closure project for \$50,741.05 was approved

Tolton Bridge Repair

When the repair proceeds, the Toltons would temporarily lose direct access across the bridge. To address this, administration recommended arranging temporary access across a neighbouring field, with confirmation already received that the neighbouring landowner agreed in principle.

The duration of restricted access for the Tolton's half-ton truck with a water tank was estimated at approximately one to one-and-a-half weeks. Light vehicles would generally still be able to access the bridge, with full vehicle restrictions limited to approximately two to three days. Payment to Sampson Engineering for the bridge repair was approved at a price of \$82,782.50.

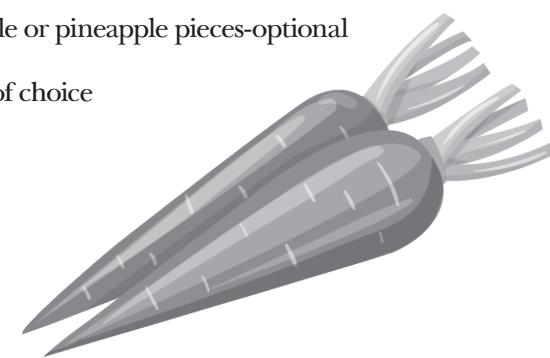
HELEN DRYSDALE OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

The carrot is one of the most beloved vegetables around the world and is known for its sweet taste, versatility, and health benefits. They're rich in beta-carotene, which our bodies convert to vitamin A, essential for good vision. Carrots also offer fiber, antioxidants, and potassium, making them a healthy addition to any diet. Carrots are one of the least perishable vegetables. They store well in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer for three to four weeks. The world produces an estimated 40 million metric tons of carrots every year. The average person will consume 10,866 carrots in a lifetime. That's a lot of 10-carrot gold!! Make carrots more than just a crunchy snack or a side dish with these recipes.

Carrot salad

This easy carrot salad is the kind of recipe you'll make again and again.

1 lb. (454 g) carrots, peeled
1 stalk celery, diced
1 apple, diced
1/2 cup drained crushed pineapple or pineapple pieces-optional
1/2 cup raisins
2-3 Tbsp. pumpkin seeds or nuts of choice
Dressing:
1/4 cup mayo
3 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
3 Tbsp. honey or 2 Tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1/2 tsp. ginger
1/2 tsp cinnamon



Whisk the dressing ingredients together until smooth. Gently stir in the prepared carrots, celery, apple, pineapple, raisins and pumpkin seeds in. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving.

Carrot, cheese and raisin sandwich

For a quick and delicious sandwich don't underestimate carrots for a change of pace.

1/2 cup grated cheese
2 Tbsp. mayonnaise
4 slices of buttered whole grain bread
lettuce

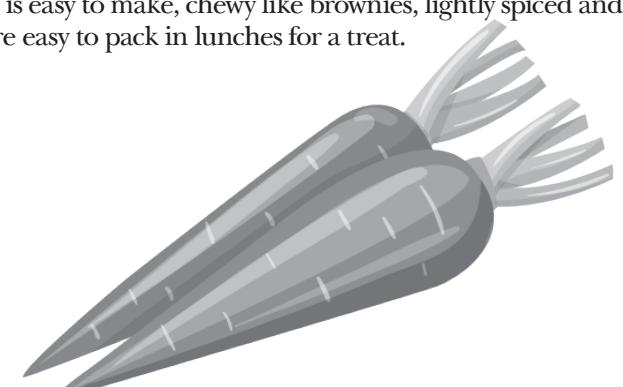
1 cup grated carrots
2 Tbsp. chopped raisins
salt and pepper if desired

Combine cheese, carrots, raisins and mayo. Spread on your buttered bread and top with lettuce. Salt and pepper if desired. Enjoy.

Carrot raisin bars

This carrot cake bars recipe is easy to make, chewy like brownies, lightly spiced and full of healthy carrots. They are easy to pack in lunches for a treat.

1 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup butter
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
1 cup white flour
1/2 cup whole wheat flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1 1/2 cup grated carrots
1/2 cup toasted nuts or sun flower seeds



Beat together sugar and butter. Add the eggs and vanilla and mix well. In a small bowl stir the flours, baking powder, baking soda, and the spices together. Mix the flour into the butter mixture. Add the carrots and raisins. Spread evenly in greased 9x9 inch square pan. Sprinkle desired nuts or sunflower seeds over. Bake in a preheated 350 F oven for approximately 35 minutes or until set in the middle.

VIRDEN LIONS HALL



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MLA for Riding Mountain

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Toll Free 844.877.7767
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#7 - 515 4th Avenue
Burlington Place, Shoal Lake, MB

Brandon Regional Health Centre welcomes the arrival of the 2026 New Year's Baby



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Brielle Eva Dayton was born at 1:16 am on January 1st at the Brandon Regional Health Centre. She weighed 8 lbs 12.9 oz and was 21 3/4 inches long. Proud parents are Kendra Henry and Aaron Dayton, along with 2 1/2-year-old big sister Chloe. The Henry/Dayton family is from Virden. Baby Brielle and her parents were given a gift basket and flowers. Thank you to the BRHC Gift Shop for always so thoughtfully putting together special items for our New Year's Baby, and to Carolyn's Floral Designs for the beautiful bouquet of roses. Prairie Mountain Health sends congratulations to the Henry/Dayton family and their new daughter!

Donations made at the Virden Theatriks show were wonderful for Food Cupboard



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Night Before Christmas by Virden Theatriks drew crowds to St. Paul's United Church for two Saturday shows before Christmas. The benefit went to Virden and Area Food Cupboard who received just over \$1000 cash donated as well as many donated food items. VAFC Treasurer Shirley Gibson noted, "It was a fantastic day on Saturday. We so appreciate everyone who came out to enjoy the show and support the Food Cupboard."

Virden gets firehall funding and TOGP upgrades

Town of Virden council meeting Dec. 16

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Fire Department Grant

There was celebration in council chambers when Coun. Marc Savy reported that the municipality had applied for \$1.5 million in provincial funding to replace Wallace District Fire Department Station 1 and had been approved for the full \$1.5 million requested.

Council acknowledged that the success of the application was the result of strong grant writing, supporting documentation, and backing from other councils.

Council noted that while it had involved roughly three years of active grant work, the effort itself stretched back closer to two decades. Members emphasized that the grant writing was finally coming to fruition, with the request for proposals (RFP) already underway and nearing completion.

Airport and TOGP

Efficiency Manitoba has fully funded the replacement of lights in Tundra Oil & Gas Place (TOGP). The upgrades include new lighting in the lobby, outdoor areas, and both upstairs and downstairs bathrooms. Grant funding of \$195,000 will be used to fully replace the facility's computerized lighting control system.

The sound system work at the arena is being completed in multiple phases, with the most expensive portions still to come. The total project cost is in the range of \$250,000 to \$300,000 and has been included in the budget.

Coun. Travis Penner asked whether a payment related to airport lighting represents the final payment. CAO Rhonda Stewart added, "It's just making sure we have that back up should something happen."

including electrical work related to the fuel system.

Authorization for Well #2 Upgrades

A motion was made to approve the recommendation and proposal from Friesen Drillers regarding repairs on Production Well #2.

CAO Rhonda Stewart said, "As of right now the drinking water advisory remains until such time as the plant meets the drinking water standards" (for arsenic).

Coun. Savy added, "Every two weeks there will be a message (about) our repairs of what's going on."

Currently only the new Well #3 is providing water to the system but Well #2 could be brought online if needed. CAO Stewart added, "It's just making sure we have that back up should something happen."

Community Development Programs

From the Ground Up and the Green Team programs

such as summer grounds maintenance are now open for grant requests and applications have already been submitted for Green Team funding on behalf of the town and the cemetery.

From the Ground Up program had been shared with the Pickleball Committee, and the municipality will likely assist that group with the application process, including providing letters of support.

Association of Manitoba Municipalities

Coun. Val Caldwell from Wallace-Woodworth presented a resolution at the AMM conference that resulted in the approval of 10 additional training seats for lab technicians. Training capacity in Manitoba is hampered by the lack of curriculum and infrastructure at Assiniboine College in Brandon. Training is being conducted in Saskatchewan.

ewan for the time being.
Catalis Renewal

The contract with Catalis, the supplier of the Town's municipal management software is up for renewal. Council agreed that Catalis offers a strong system and that its value depends on being fully utilized. Although initial setup for new functions takes time, sending alerts to the community once the system is configured can be done very quickly.

Council members expressed concern about data protection and privacy, noting the municipality's commitment to safeguarding information. Clauses in the contract related to confidentiality, disclosure, and liability, include a limitation that caps the provider's liability at six months of service fees. Council members noted this offered relatively little recourse in the event of a data breach originating with the service provider. Staff will contact

the company about these issues and inform council of their replies as soon as they are available.

The motion to renew the contract was carried.

RCMP Report

Staffing levels remained unchanged throughout November, with additional staffing expected in December. A total of 100 calls for service were recorded during the month, consistent with overall 2024 trends. Approximately half of these calls were traffic-related, with most involving speeding and impaired driving.

An increase was noted in mental health-related calls, with eight incidents reported. These calls require extended time commitments for hospital transports and wait times.

Six prisoners were held during November.

A member returning from parental leave has resumed full duties as of Dec. 7 and two members have returned to shifts, with projections indicating the detachment will return to 10 members by January.

Virden & District Health Auxiliary receives a donation



Congratulations to Garry Gardiner, winner of \$2290 in the Virden & District Health Auxiliary's recent 50/50 draw.



Scott Wilson is shown presenting a cheque for \$4000 from the Virden Oilmen's Golf Tournament to members of the Virden and District Health Auxiliary. The Virden Oilmen are generous supporters of the Auxiliary and their support helps the organization achieve their goals. With Scott are (l to r): Thelma Quinn, Auxiliary President, Carol Anne Trowell, Secretary, and Gwen Clarke, Treasurer.

MJHL SEASON UPDATE

MJHL HOCKEY

DEREK HOLTOM

Despite being just 16 years old, Uhrina scored twice and added 10 assists for 12 points in just six games.

A draft pick of the WHL's Victoria Royals, it will be interesting to see if they make the pitch for him to make the jump to major junior before the upcoming Jan. 10 deadline. The Royals are not contenders this year, and as Uhrina is already 10th in scoring in the WHL, the Royals may want to bring him up.

The Safe Work Manitoba Defenseman of the Month is Ty Pratte from the Dauphin Kings. The blueliner had nine assists in just six games to help keep the Kings atop of the MJHL's West Division.

The McMunn and Yates Goaltender of the Month is Hunter Bauer from the Steinbach Pistons. He earned his honour thanks to a perfect 5-0 record in December, with a 0.80 GAA, a .967 save percentage, and three shutouts.

Two of those shutouts were 7-0 laughers against the bottom two teams in the MJHL – the Winnipeg Monarchs and the Northern Manitoba Blizzard (which, in my opinion, continues to hold the MJHL back – having such extremes between the best and the worst in the MJHL. No scout is going to be moved by dominating performances against a lesser opponent). His third shutout, though, was against the Portage Terriers, one of the hottest teams in the MJHL.

The Chevrolet Rookie of the Month is Loik Leduc from the Niverville Nighthawks. The first year player had four goals and seven assists in nine games to earn the honour.

And finally the Manitoba Pork Peak Performer is Jack Clark from the Neepawa Titans. In eight games Clark scored eight times and added three assists for 11 points.

We didn't have time due to the holiday to recognize the final Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Players of the Week of

December, but we do now.

The first winner is William Lyons from the Winkler Flyers. He only played one game but he made it count, scoring twice and adding an assist for good measure in a win over the Winnipeg Blues.

Goaltender Bryson Yaschyshyn of the Dauphin Kings is up next. He shutout the Neepawa Titans with a 23-save effort in his lone game before Christmas to earn this honour.

The final winner is defenseman Liam Doyle from the Steinbach Pistons. In his lone game he scored once and added two assists for a three-point night and week.

The junior hockey trade deadline is Jan. 10, and it remains to be seen who will be buyers, sellers, or those who stand pat.

A lot of teams have dreams of playoff glory but right now the only real battle for a playoff spot is between the Winkler Flyers and the Selkirk Steelers. Just a single point separated fourth and fifth place heading into January in the East Division.

The Swan Valley Stampeders still feel they can catch the Waywayseecappo Wolverines – they entered January 10 points out of a playoff spot. To do so they'll need to win five more games than the Wolverines down the stretch. Considering they have only won six all year, that appears to be a tall order. The two expansion cousins have two games remaining this year – both in Swan River. The Stamps will need to win both of those for a legit shot at clawing their way back into a playoff spot.

At the top of the standings, the top three teams in the East Division will be interesting to watch at the deadline. Only eight points separate these three teams – one of which will be out in the first round of the playoffs despite them all having more points than the West Division leading Dauphin Kings. Niverville, Steinbach and Portage will all be buyers at the deadline for sure.

One caveat – with so much player movement upwards these days to the WHL thanks to a rule change that allows major junior players to play NCAA, the best teams in the MJHL will also be prime targets for WHL teams looking to shore up their rosters for the playoff run. Lots of variables to consider heading into Jan. 10.

From the Prairies to the Highlands Tour 204 Part 17

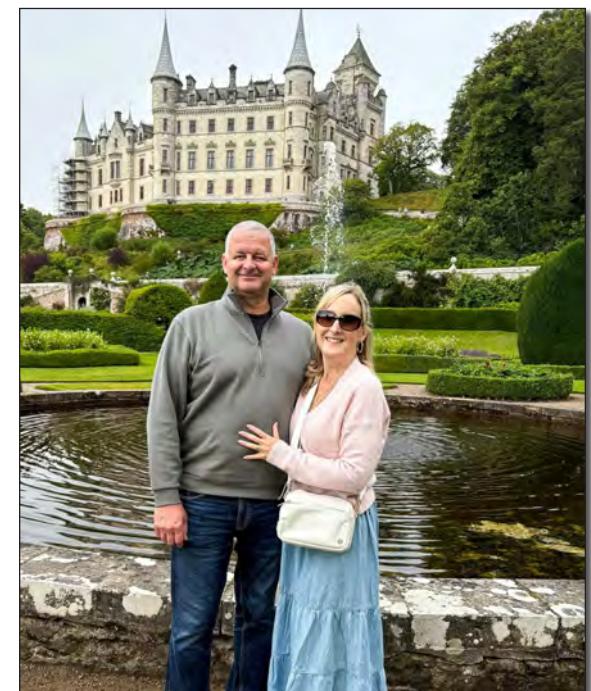


PHOTO BY CELIA NOLAN

Donald and Devon Caldwell our amazing guides!

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Reflecting back on our holiday, we felt it was a trip of a lifetime! Scotland is so beautiful, with its hills, streams, and historical sites. I could go on and on about this amazing country!

The pictures we have are beautiful and they just immediately take you back to where we toured for sixteen days.

This wonderful holiday would not have been possible without our leader Dr. Devon Caldwell and our trusty driver Donald Caldwell. Devon had all the I's dotted and the T's crossed when it came to all the tours, sites, and accommodations that we experienced. What a talented person she is, nothing was left undone, as our whole trip ran smoothly which was not an easy feat when planning for fifteen people ages seven to seventy-two! She used her "God-given gifts" to make others extremely proud of her! We are so fortunate to call both Devon and Donald our friends!

While our trip was so awesome, the trip home was gruelling to say the least. We left Edinburgh airport having said goodbye with hugs and tears to Eric, Shane, Donald and Devon, as they were continuing on to other ports. As if our six-hour flight to Toronto wasn't enough, we had an eight-hour layover there as well, and on top of that, a bad storm was hitting Winnipeg.

We got re-routed to Regina as it was unfit to land. We sat on Regina's tarmac for two hours and then finally took off for Winnipeg again. Originally, we were to land at twelve fifteen a.m., but it turned out to be five a.m. instead. A hearty breakfast revived us and we were able to stay awake for the three-hour drive home! It was a long day!

Thank you, Devon and Donald, for the time of our lives, in fact they did such a fabulous job, plans are already being made for Tour 204 2027! Until then folks, if you ever get an opportunity to venture to Scotland, don't be late boarding the plane!

SPORTS

SPORTS NOTES: TEAM BROWN COMPETES AGAINST PROVINCE'S BEST

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

A young local curling rink displayed resilience and improvement at the Asham U18 Female Provincial bonspiel.

Team Brown finished 2-3 at the event, which was hosted in Riverton and Gimli. The rink is made up of skip Tiffany Brown, Minita; third Joelle Barkley, Virden; second Hannah Low, Maryfield, Sask.; and lead Lexi Brown, Minita.

"A lot of what we had been trying to correct throughout the year was worked on and improvement was there," said coach Cory Barkley of Virden. "We started without the hammer each game and had some very slow starts to games, but the girls did a great job of being resilient and battling through. Although we ended up light of our goal of making the playoffs, they understood how close they were to getting over that line."

The rink faced the top two seeds in its pool in back-to-back games. Coach Barkley said they "took both teams to last rock in the eighth end but ultimately ended up short in both games."

For the second straight year, Barkley received the coaching award. He said, "It is nice recognition, but I feel it's as much a team award as anything. We try to play the game the right way and I think that is noticed by the other teams, so I give the girls the credit for this one."

Wilkinson All-Manitoba

Virden's Tyra Wilkinson was honoured by Volleyball Manitoba with a spot on the All-Manitoba Team in

the A-AA-AAA girls category. She said, "I was very surprised when I saw my name on the list for the All Manitoba team."

Wilkinson learned of her honour during the organization's Grad All-Star Games in December. In Winnipeg, she competed in two 12-minute sets with and against the province's best.

"There were a lot of really good players and we had never played together throughout my whole high school season but we all knew each other so it was nice and a great learning experience," Wilkinson said.

She is the daughter of Pam McLeod and Terry Wilkinson. Wilkinson praised the support of her parents. She said, "My mom drives me wherever I need to be and is always there to support me. My dad makes sure he can watch as many games as he can when he is not working."

Oil Kings Fall

The Virden Oil Kings fell 5-4 to the Minnedosa Bombers on the road on Jan. 3. The Virden senior team's record was 8-4-0-0 heading into this week. The Oil Kings play in Wawanesa on Jan. 9 and host the Neepawa Farmers on Jan. 10.

Against the Bombers, Elisha Bambridge gave Virden a 1-0 first period lead. Minnedosa scored twice in the first 12 minutes of the second period to lead 2-1. Its last marker was a power play goal, which the Oil Kings' Tanner Koroscil answered with a man-advantage goal of his own to knot the contest at 2-2.

The Bombers took a 4-2 lead with two goals, including a shorthanded marker, in the first five minutes of the third period. Shawn Bowles, in his season debut for Virden, lit the lamp twice to tie the game up at 4-4.



PHOTO BY STEPHANIE KONTZIE

Tiffany Brown, Joelle Barkley, Hannah Low and Lexi Brown recently competed at the Asham U18 Female Provincial bonspiel.

Matt Saler scored the game winner for Minnedosa on a power play with 55 seconds left.

Oil Kings goalie Duncan Paddock had 26 saves. Devon Fordyce stopped 22 for the Bombers. Brad Bowles recorded three assists for Virden. As of Jan. 4, he paced the Tiger Hills Hockey League with 38 points and 26 assists in 11 games.

OIL CAPS' WORTHINGTON CAPTURES SILVER AT WORLD JUNIOR A CHALLENGE

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virden Oil Capitals forward Colten Worthington won a silver medal and gained valuable experience at the World Junior A Hockey Challenge.

The 18-year-old from Brandon helped Team Canada West to a runner-up finish at the prestigious event, held in Trois-Rivières, Que., Dec. 7-13. The squad fell 5-1 to the United States in the gold medal game. Team Canada West secured its spot in the final with a 2-0 shutout of Canada East in the semifinals. In the round robin, Team Canada West lost 6-2 to Sweden, 4-3 in a shootout to Canada East, and 4-0 to the U.S.

"Winning silver was a huge achievement for us after coming into the semifinals without a win," Worthington said. "It was super exciting to play with all those guys and win a medal."

The World Junior A Challenge medal was a highlight of a strong start to Worthington's first season with the Manitoba Junior Hockey League's Oil Capitals. As of Jan. 5, the 6-foot, 186-pounder was ranked third on the team in assists with 17 in 20 games. He was tied with Liam Goertzen and Carson Wright for fourth on the Oil Caps with 21 points. His 1.05 points per game were second on the squad, trailing only Bryce Bryant's 1.45.

"Colten does a lot of things well," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "He is a big body who can play physical, and works extremely hard. He plays on our first power play unit at the net front and really can be effective in all situations. He has the ability to be successful in any type of game. He can play physical and

grind, he can play a faster skilled game, and can play any forward position. We are excited to have him here and look forward to his second half after returning from the World Junior A Challenge where he won a silver medal with the Canada West team. We are very proud of him."

Several World Junior A Hockey Challenge alumni have gone on to National Hockey League careers. Each year the event's teams are stocked with top talent. Select players from the Alberta Junior Hockey League, Manitoba Junior Hockey League, Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League, and Superior International Junior Hockey League competed for spots on Team Canada West.

"I really loved the fast-paced games and playing as an underdog against a bunch of NHL draft picks and future draft picks. As well as getting so close with a group of random hockey players from the west part of Canada," Worthington said of the World Junior A Hockey Challenge.

Worthington was drafted in 2022 by the Saskatoon Blades in the 11th round of the Western Hockey League Prospects Draft. He made his junior debut with that team as an affiliated player in 2023-2024. Last season, as a rookie, Worthington had two goals and five points in 48 games for the Blades. He said that experience helped him during the World Junior A Hockey Challenge.

"Playing in the WHL helped my game with the resiliency I went through with all of the emotions and ups and downs that came along while playing in the tournament," Worthington said. "As well as the fast paced, hard style that I have seen and played in before."



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS
Colten Worthington is enjoying a strong first season with the Virden Oil Capitals.

It really prepared me and helped me to be the best I could be in the tournament."

He has a strong track record of winning. In 2022, Worthington helped the U15 AAA Brandon Wheat Kings to a league championship. He was a Second Team All-Star in 2024 when the U18 AAA Wheat Kings won the Manitoba U18 AAA Hockey League championship. The squad finished second in the national Telus Cup U18 AAA championship. He has brought that winning experience to the Oil Capitals.

"Playing in Virden has been a really fun experience and has shown me again why I really love playing the game-not just for the on-ice factors but the relationships between all the boys and getting close with everyone in such a quick time," Worthington said.

Candles aglow in the Night



PHOTO BY ED JAMES

Elkhorn Cemetery alight with ice candles at Christmas season 2025

By Ed James
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

For the last few years there has been a Christmas tradition at the Elkhorn Community Cemetery. The event - placing of handmade, one at a time ice candles that glow in the dark night throughout the cemetery.

These have been placed on graves, memorials, along the pathways and at the cemetery gates to remember loved ones who have passed away at Christmas time.

At one location there is a fully decorated Christmas tree in remembrance of a special son that passed away too young. There are a few other smaller but similar trees in the cemetery, shin-

ing bright in the night.

If you choose to walk or drive along the paths, it's a place of peacefulness and calm on the dark evenings of the Christmas season to remember past loved ones, old friends and the joy, love and laughter they brought into your life at one time.

This is the fifth event with over 200 candles this year, each year there seem to be more. During the few weeks they are in place, they are carefully checked each day to keep them burning each night.

This yearly remembrance is carried out by community members for their loved ones during the Christmas season - peace and joy in the new year.

- Cheers Mr. Ed

New Years Eve celebrated at Seniors' Center



PHOTOS BY ED JAMES

Following the delicious meal, visits and card games.

By Ed James
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The gathering at the Elkhorn Leisure Center for New Year's Eve potluck supper was a bit down in numbers this year but holiday spirits were high.

If you do some math, those in attendance that evening are part of a generation that 50 or 60 years ago, might have celebrated the New Year with lots of drinking, a late night and perhaps driving home afterwards when they should not have!

That was then but now, things have changed for this group. I have seen in the last several years, perhaps due, the wisdom of age, the high cost of alcohol and the fear of losing one's license, that our New Year celebrations are more subdued, and just as much fun.

Leisure Center president Ed Clayton welcomed everyone and asked one of the members to give grace. The meal itself was far from being pot luck, there was a large variety of main dishes and enough for seconds if wanted. While at another table were a wide selection of seasonal desserts and a good measure of chocolate candies.

To add to the mix, there was a good meas-

ure of conversation at all the tables about our lives, families and futures.

After the meal, many hands made light work of clearing up and washing the dishes. While another group set up the tables for card games. On the sideboard there were still lots of deserts left and pots of tea and coffee.

The Elkhorn Leisure Center has been in operation since around 1975 and is a place where seniors and young at heart can stop in for a morning coffee, afternoon or evening cards and game events.

However, it's also a place that offers seniors information of real-life issues they are facing. Many of the presentations are arranged by Seniors Access to Independent Living (SAIL). Membership is \$20 per year and for small groups, the hall is available for rent. If you're an active senior in the Elkhorn area perhaps this is a place for your talents, skills and interests!

By 10:30pm the hall was empty with most members home in their PJ's watching the rest of the world celebrating New Year's from the comfort of their Lazy Boy chair. It was an evening well spent, the way I see it.

From the members of Elkhorn Leisure Center, the best in the New Year, come and visit us!



Elkhorn seniors load their plates at potluck New year's supper.

Empire-Advance

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2026 Special Issue Calendar

Event	Due Date	Run Date
Valentines Day	February 6, 2026	February 13, 2026
Easter	March 27, 2026	April 2, 2026
Mothers Day	May 1, 2026	May 8, 2026
Fathers Day	June 12, 2026	June 19, 2026
Canada Day	June 19, 2025	June 26, 2026
Grad VEA	June 19, 2026	July 3, 2026
Virden Rodeo	July 24, 2026	July 31, 2026
Oil Caps	September 25, 2026	October 2, 2026
Thanksgiving	October 2, 2026	October 9, 2026
Firefighters	October 16, 2026	October 23, 2026
Remembrance Day	October 30, 2026	November 6, 2026
Christmas	December 4, 2026	December 18, 2026

Sign up for all specials now and get an extra 10% off!!

Police Report

Westman RCMP Service Report for Dec. 14 to Jan 3

Submitted
BY WESTMAN RCMP

Dec. 14 - 20, 2025

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 54 calls for service. Some of these calls for service include 22 traffic offences, 5 Mischief, 1 Wellbeing Checks, 1 Mental Health Related, 1 Suspicious Persons, 2 False Alarms, 3 911 Acts, 5 Assistance to Canadian Agencies, 1 Assaults and 1 Fail to Comply with Probation Order files.

On Dec. 15, during routine traffic patrols within the RM of Pipestone, RCMP conducted a traffic stop with an unregistered vehicle. RCMP confirmed the vehicle was unregistered and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Drive an Unregistered Vehicle, which carries a fine of \$298.

On Dec. 15, during routine traffic patrols within the Town of Virden, RCMP conducted a traffic stop with a vehicle that failed to stop at a stop sign. RCMP conducted checks and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Disobey a traffic control device namely a stop sign, which carries a fine of \$203.

On Dec. 16, RCMP responded to a report of an unwanted intoxicated male at a residence in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth. RCMP attended the residence and located the accused who was placed under arrest. While transporting the accused male to the cells, he urinated in the back of a police cruiser and was re-arrested for Mischief. The accused was lodged and released on a court date to appear in February.

On Dec. 17, during routine traffic patrols within the Town of Virden, RCMP conducted a traffic stop with a vehicle that failed to stop at a stop sign. RCMP conducted checks and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Disobey a traffic control device namely a stop sign, which carries a fine of \$203.

On Dec. 18, 2025, during routine traffic patrols within the RM of Sifton,

RCMP conducted a traffic stop with an unregistered vehicle. RCMP confirmed the vehicle had a different plate which did not match the registration card and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice, which carries a fine of \$113.

Dec. 21 - 27, 2025

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 26 calls for service. Some of these calls for service include 8 traffic offences, 1 Wellbeing Checks, 2 Mental Health Related, 1 False Alarms, 3 911 Acts, 4 Assistance to Canadian Agencies/General Public, 5 Assaults, 1 Murder 2nd Degree, 1 Utter Threats, 1 Possession of an unauthorized weapon, 1 Fail to comply with Order and 2 Mischief files.

On Dec. 29, RCMP responded to a report of a Domestic Assault in the Settlement of Sioux Valley. Members attended and spoke with the complaint who was the victim, advised her ex-partner had assaulted her during an altercation and took off from the scene prior to police arrival. Members obtained statement from the victim. Members made patrols and conducted neighbourhood enquires but were unable to locate the accused.

On Dec. 24, RCMP responded to a report of an erratic driver in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth. Members located the vehicle and conducted a traffic stop. Upon arrival, members completed a sobriety check with a 20-year-old male. Driver showed signs of impairment, ADSE test resulted positive for THC. The driver was issued a three-day license suspension.

On Dec. 26, RCMP responded to a report of a Domestic Assault in the Settlement of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. Complainant reported that his ex-partner had assaulted by punching him in the head. Members attended the residence along with EMS. Members obtained a statement from the complainant and located the accused who was arrested for Assault. Members obtained a statement from the accused who claimed she was initially assaulted by the complainant. Complainant and the accused were arrested for one count of Assault. Both were released on an Undertaking to appear in court in February.

On Dec. 17, during routine traffic patrols within the Town of Virden, RCMP conducted a traffic stop with a vehicle that failed to stop at a stop sign. RCMP conducted checks and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Disobey a traffic control device namely a stop sign, which carries a fine of \$203.

pear in court in February. Dec. 28, '25 - Jan. 3, '26

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 47 calls for service. Some of these calls for service include 18 traffic offences, 1 Wellbeing Checks, 2 Mental Health Related, 2 False Alarms, 3 911 Acts, 4 Assistance to Canadian Agencies/General Public, 5 Assaults, 1 Murder 2nd Degree, 1 Utter Threats, 1 Possession of an unauthorized weapon, 1 Fail to comply with Order and 2 Mischief files.

On Dec. 29, RCMP responded to a report of a Domestic Assault in the Settlement of Sioux Valley. Members attended and spoke with the complaint who was the victim, advised her ex-partner had assaulted her during an altercation and took off from the scene prior to police arrival. Members obtained statement from the victim. Members made patrols and conducted neighbourhood enquires but were unable to locate the accused.

On Dec. 30, RCMP responded to a report of a double stabbing in the Settlement of Sioux Valley. Members received the report of two males who were stabbed in the neck and the stomach by a 16-year-old male subject. Members attended the residence with EMS and provided medical aid to the victims. Members learned that the male subject had fled from the scene prior to police arrival. EMS provided medical aid to one victim at the scene, and the second victim was transported to the hospital with serious bleeding. The second victim scurried to his injuries. Members obtained a statement from the witnesses. Members along with West District CREST, Brandon RCMP and K9 attended a residence where the

male subject was located and arrested. The male was charged with Utter Threats, Assault with Weapon and Murder 2nd degree and was remanded into custody. Major Crime continues to investigate.

On Dec. 30, during routine traffic patrols within the Town of Virden, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 133km/hr in a 110 km/hr zone. RCMP initiated a traffic stop, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$351. RCMP also observed a second vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 136km/hr in a 110 km/hr zone. RCMP initiated a traffic stop, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$391.

On Dec. 31, RCMP received a report from Safety Officers in the Settlement of Sioux Valley for an unwanted male who was intoxicated and was trying to fight with the occupants. Safety Officers attended the residence and located the accused male who was placed under arrest. During the search incidental to arrest, the accused was found to be in possession of a "spike tomahawk" and a "knife". The male was transported to Virden RCMP detachment where he was lodged. The male was released with an Undertaking condition and is scheduled to appear in court in March.

On Jan. 1, during routine traffic patrols within the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, RCMP responded to a report of a double stabbing in the Settlement of Sioux Valley. Members received the report of two males who were stabbed in the neck and the stomach by a 16-year-old male subject. Members attended the residence with EMS and provided medical aid to the victims. Members learned that the male subject had fled from the scene prior to police arrival. EMS provided medical aid to one victim at the scene, and the second victim was transported to the hospital with serious bleeding. The second victim scurried to his injuries. Members obtained a statement from the witnesses. Members along with West District CREST, Brandon RCMP and K9 attended a residence where the

worth, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 130km/hr in a 100 km/hr zone. RCMP initiated a traffic stop, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$442.

On Jan. 2, RCMP responded to a report of a Domestic Assault in the Settlement of Sioux Valley. Members attended and spoke with the complaint who was the victim reported her partner had assaulted her during an altercation and choked her and had fled from the scene prior to police arrival. Members obtained statements and made extensive patrols, and conducted neighbourhood enquires but were unable to locate the accused. Members applied for a warrant for the accused who is currently at large for Assault by choking. Members continue to investigate.

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.

**Virden
RCMP
investigating
homicide**

By MB RCMP
MEDIA RELATIONS UNIT

On December 30, 2025, at 4:55 am, Virden RCMP were dispatched to a report of a stabbing at a residence in the community of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation.

Officers responded immediately and upon arrival were advised that the male suspect had fled on foot. Two males, aged 23 and 25, were located at the residence with stab wounds.

The 25-year-old was transported to hospital by EMS in serious condition and shortly thereafter succumbed to his injuries. The 23-year-old sustained non-life-threatening injuries.

Officers were able to locate the suspect a short time later at another residence in the community and he was arrested without incident with the assistance of RCMP officers from the Blue Hills Detachment, the West District Crime Reduction Enforcement Support Team (CREST) and Police Dog Services.

A 16-year-old male youth, from Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, has been charged with Second Degree murder.

Virden RCMP, along with Manitoba RCMP Major Crime Services, continue to investigate.

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CLASSIFIEDS

Obituary

IN LOVING MEMORY

CAWSTON, LETITIA JOYCE

BORN: APRIL 21ST, 1926, IN BROOKDALE, MANITOBA.

DIED: DECEMBER 1ST, 2025, IN CALGARY, ALBERTA.



Joyce passed away peacefully at her home in Cambridge Manor. She remained feisty until the end with no apparent health issues except her struggle with dementia.

Joyce was born to William and Stella McDonald (née Armstrong) and grew up on the family farm near the village of Brookdale. She attended grade school in Brookdale and reminisced often about her trips to town for school in the horse drawn wagon pulled by her beloved pony Scotty.

Joyce, the youngest of twins, was born to much fanfare on the same day as Queen Elizabeth II, was predeceased by her twin brother Stewart, brother Eldon and Sister Bernice.

Growing up, Joyce enjoyed summers at Clear Lake in Riding Mountain National Park, where she developed her socializing skills working at the Old Chalet Lodge. These formative years solidified a lifelong love of "the Park" and a yearly anticipation of when it would be time to "go to the cottage".

Joyce took her Teaching Certificate in Brandon following graduation from high school in Brookdale. Her first teaching assignment was the Osprey School, a "country school" in the RM of North Cypress from 1944-1945, at the age of 18.

Joyce met Clare Cawston unofficially at a Davidson family dinner shortly after Clare returned from his military service in 1946. Their relationship became official when Joyce accepted a teaching position in Kelwood, Manitoba following her graduation from the Central Normal School in Winnipeg.

Joyce and Clare were married in Neepawa, October 20, 1951, and began their life together in Kelwood where Joyce taught school and Clare ran the family Ford – International Harvester garage and dealership.

Joyce and Clare moved to Winnipeg in the fall of 1955 so Clare could attend the University of Manitoba. Joyce took an elementary school teaching position in Fort Garry while Clare attended classes in Geology.

Joyce and Clare spent two summers in Virden, Manitoba and moved there permanently in 1959, after Clare's graduation. This is where they would spend the next 60 years, raising a daughter (Katherine) and two sons (Bruce and Ronald) in their house on Seymour Street, engaging in the community and developing many lifelong friendships.

Joyce began teaching in Virden in 1966, starting with a kindergarten class in the basement of their house on Seymour. In 1967, kindergarten classes were started in the Virden School Division, with an enrollment of 52, and Joyce was hired as the first teacher. Later that school year she was appointed principal of Goulter School.

Joyce enjoyed a 35-year teaching career, 22 of those years as Principal. Joyce led by example with energy, determination, and commitment. This included her work with Frank Eastman, chief at Canupawakpa, developing opportunities at Goulter School for students from the reserve and created many meaningful and lifelong relationships.

Joyce advocated for students experiencing physical and mental challenges to access resources from a school assistant to a Braille typewriter and other necessary equipment for the life skills room that aided and supported special needs students.

Exposure to the arts was important to Joyce and each teacher at Goulter was expected to have a class entry in a minimum of one discipline in the Virden Music and Arts Festival. Joyce also arranged for yearly presentations from various Artists in the local Schools. These ranged from week-long workshops in pottery and drum making to performances by puppeteers and ballet dancers. This exposure was noticeable when Goulter students attended concerts at the Auditorium Theatre.

Core subjects were always a priority and under her guidance, students were encouraged to engage in the annual Science Fair to encourage those with a passion for science research and experimentation. Students were also involved in the planting of trees around the perimeter of the school grounds and helping with Manitoba Native Plants Garden as Joyce believed environmental education was an imperative.

Joyce cared for others and to help families needing support, food items were collected at Thanksgiving and Christmas and donated to the Food Cupboard. A mitten tree collected warm items as an expression of charity.

Academic achievement and character development were priorities for Joyce. During her time working at Goulter, she enrolled in Brandon University to obtain her Bachelor of Education degree. This was done while working a full-time job, raising 3 children and driving an hour each way into Brandon to attend classes!

Joyce encouraged staff members to pursue similar career growth and to take advantage of professional development opportunities. If you were hired to teach at Goulter during Joyce's principalship, you knew there would be hard work, the presumption of contribution, and a high expectation of being the best educator you could be. Each person had different opinions, experiences, and talents, Joyce had the unique ability to solidify these differences into one strong, connected unit. Joyce insisted on teacher participation in local and Provincial MTS, and later the Retired Teachers chapter of RTAM. She helped guide each organization and held executive positions. Joyce supported students, their families, and staff and never took the easy path.

Joyce retired in 1989, to a lovely retirement party which filled the Virden Curling Rink with her many friends and colleagues. Before and after retirement Joyce remained active in the community and if she identified a need she acted. Joyce tutored English as a Second Language (ESL) Students, and with Doug Braybrook, initiated the forming of APPLE ... the Association of Parents and Professionals for Literacy Education. The organization is a local Virden non-profit that still operates today, mandated to help adults complete their General Educational Development (GED) certificate for high school equivalency. Joyce was a founding member of the local Retired Teachers. She served as first President of Virden's Millennium History Book Committee and was a member of the Advisory Committee of Westbran Employment Development Centre.

As long-standing members of St Paul's United Church, Joyce and Clare both sang in the choir and served on committees. When St. Paul's women held their inaugural meeting with 70 women present, Joyce was elected the recording secretary. Later she served as Sunday school superintendent and member of the church council.

Joyce had a lifelong love for the Arts and was a strong promoter of their importance in the community. She was a member of the Red Hatters, played Piano, sang in various Choirs and helped form the Virden Area Arts Council bringing first class entertainment to Virden's Auditorium Theater. A "concert series" ticket gave area residents the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and understanding of a wide range of talents.

Joyce was recognized for her efforts as the recipient of several awards including; the Lescarbot Award in 1992, for her contribution to Arts in the community, a result of her work with the Virden Music and Arts Festival, the Auditorium theatre Board, the Thomas Board, The Library Board and the Virden Community Arts Council; the Queens Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002 for outstanding service to her community, the Medal of Distinction and the Fort la Bosse School Division's 1st Merit Award in 2012.

Aside from her work and community, Joyce liked to travel enjoying trips to Ireland, England, Russia and Hawaii as well as cruises in the Mediterranean, to the Bahamas and many trips with Clare to South Florida in the winter to visit her daughter Kathy.

A surprise Party held in 2006, at Clear Lake to celebrate Joyce's 80th birthday was attended by family, friends and colleagues from near and far. Joyce's 90th Birthday was celebrated in Virden in 2016, also attended by family and a large community contingent. Joyce loved to socialize, thoroughly enjoying such events. Her weekly trips to the grocery store, in retirement, were a literal social event!

In 2019, Joyce and Clare made the difficult decision to leave their home in Virden and move to Brandon (Riverheights Terrace). While not far away, it was a tearful goodbye to the Virden community they loved and their many dear friends. Joyce and Clare moved west to Calgary and closer to family in 2020. Clare passed away in Calgary in November of 2020. Joyce's last visit to Virden was an uplifting event in 2022 for an impromptu tea, planned by generous members of the Virden community.

A dedicated educator, tireless volunteer and supporter of the Arts, always having time to talk with friends and neighbors. Time with Joyce will be cherished by all who knew her. Joyce will be dearly missed by her daughter Katherine Corey, (Mitch Feldman), Son Bruce Cawston (Larissa) and grandchildren Natasha (Sam) and Benjamin (Jennifer, great-grandchildren Isaiyah and Sahalee), Son Ronald Cawston (Tari) and grandchildren Benjamin, Nicholas and Zachary.

Thank you to the staff of the Brenda Strafford Foundation Cambridge Manor for the care and attention that Joyce received while there from March of 2024.

A Memorial will be planned for the summer of 2026.

In Lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Auditorium Theater in Virden or the Alzheimer Society Manitoba for Dementia Research.



Obituary

IN LOVING MEMORY

ELSIE MCCOLL

1930 - 2025



Elsie McColl, beloved wife to the late Glen McColl and loving mother to Roy, Vance, and Glen Allan McColl, passed away at Elkwood Manor in Elkhorn, Manitoba Monday, December 29, 2025, surrounded by family. Elsie was 95 years old.

Elsie is survived by her sons and daughters-in-law Roy (Rhonda), Vance (Brenda Lee), and Glen (Shelly); grandchildren Charlotte (Conrad), Travis (Jacqueline), Brodie (Stacey), Ceanna (Bryce), Taylor (Aisling), Logan, Braden (Cass), and Mac (Emma); along with 11 great grandchildren; sister-in-law Shirley (Jim) McColl; and many nephews, nieces and extended family members.

Elsie was predeceased by her parents Henry and Anna Kliever; her mother- and father-in-law Constance and Alfred McColl; her husband Glen; her brothers George, Frank (Annie), Jake (Mary), Dave (Esther); her sister Anne (Cecile Perlette and Jake Dueck); and Glen's siblings: Roy, Bert, Ron (Rosemary), Jack (Bev), Margaret (Bill) Bartley, and Jim.

Elsie was born August 20, 1930 on the family farm, the youngest of 6 children and the only member of the family born in Canada.

Elsie enjoyed farm living and spent the majority of her life in and around the community of Elkhorn. She enjoyed school and had thoughts of becoming a teacher, but for various reasons chose to go to work in Elkhorn instead.

On December 20, 1952, Elsie married the love of her life, Glen Douglas McColl, and they spent just over 53 years in holy matrimony. Much of their time together was spent on their farm 5-miles east of Elkhorn (Tower View Farm), working tirelessly to make ends meet while raising three sons and contributing and volunteering to the communities in which they lived (Elkhorn and Hargrave).

Once her husband Glen passed in March 2006, however, the love of the farm was never the same, and in 2007, the farm was sold. Elsie moved to Elkhorn and lived independently in her own home and in Elkview Lodge.

Then, in 2018, Elsie's health took a turn for the worst when a fall caused fractures in several vertebrae. Under her doctors' advice, Elsie applied for and received admission into Elkwood Manor.

On numerous occasions Elsie commented on how wonderful everyone was at the Manor and how well she was treated.

Over the years, Elsie made many decisions that made things much easier for her sons. For example, she decided when she no longer wanted to drive; she spent one year on the farm by herself and then made the decision that it was time to sell; she knew when it was time to move into Elkview Lodge; and she decided when it was time for her to apply for admission into Elkwood Manor.

Elsie McColl was a wonderful human being who will be sorely missed by all who knew her. And the legacy that she leaves behind for all of us to aspire to is that of love.

A legacy of love.

A private graveside service will be held at Elkhorn Cemetery at a later date.

For those who so desire, memorial tributes may be made to the charity of their choice in memory of Elsie.

Messages of condolence may be placed at www.carscaddenfuneralchapel.com

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CLASSIFIEDS

Help Wanted



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUILDING, PLANNING AND MUNICIPAL BY-LAW INSPECTOR

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a qualified individual for the position of **Building, Planning & Municipal By-Law Inspector**. This role is responsible for ensuring compliance with Manitoba's building codes, planning regulations, and all municipal by-laws (including zoning, property standards, nuisance) while administering development agreements and planning documentation for Trans Canada West Planning District on behalf of the Municipality.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Conduct building, plumbing, mechanical, zoning, and property standards inspections
- Review and issue building, plumbing, occupancy, and development permits
- Ensure permits and documents are uploaded to the Manitoba Municipal Reporting Online (MMO) system
- Enforce all municipal by-laws – property standards, signage, nuisance, noise, etc.
- Investigate complaints and issue warnings, orders, and violations as required
- Administer and monitor development agreements and planning documentation
- Assist with conditional use, variance, and subdivision applications
- Maintain accurate digital and paper records, inspection notes, and reports
- Provide information and guidance to residents, developers, and contractors
- Coordinate with RCMP, Peace Officers or Provincial agencies for joint enforcement
- Perform other duties as assigned by the CAO or Council

Skills and Qualifications

- Experience in building inspection, by-law enforcement, or municipal planning as asset
- Ability to read building plans and interpret zoning regulations
- Strong communication and customer service skills
- Manitoba Class 5 driver's license (clean abstract)
- Inspector certification (Parts 3 & 9) or trade background an asset

The R.M. Wallace-Woodworth offers a competitive salary based upon the applicant's experience and qualifications. A complete job description is available upon request. The successful candidate can expect a salary reflective of their experience and qualifications.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/RECEPTIONIST

Job Description

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a motivated and professional individual for the full-time position of **Administrative Assistant/Receptionist** at the Virden Municipal Office. The Administrative Assistant/Receptionist reports to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and is responsible for providing frontline customer service and administrative support to the CAO and municipal departments.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Provide front-counter reception and customer service to residents, contractors, and visitors
- Answer and direct phone calls, emails, and general inquiries
- Receive, process, and receipt payments in accordance with municipal policies
- Assist with utility billing, changes of ownership, and related records
- Handle incoming and outgoing mail, deliveries, and document filing
- Provide administrative support to municipal departments including Utilities and Transportation
- Cross-training to provide coverage at other municipal offices (Kenton and Elkhorn) as required
- Active role in the Municipal Safety Program
- Uphold a strict level of confidentiality
- All other duties as assigned

Skills and Qualifications

- Strong customer service, communication, and organizational skills
- Attention to detail and ability to manage multiple priorities
- Previous office or reception experience preferred
- High school graduate at minimum; post-secondary administrative training considered an asset
- Demonstrated proficiency with computer applications including Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Outlook)
- Ability to work independently and as part of a small team
- Valid Class 5 Driver's Licence

A complete job description is available upon request. The successful candidate can expect a salary reflective of their experience and qualifications. The position will be eligible for a full benefits package after 6 months, including employer-paid Blue Cross insurance and a matched pension.

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

E-mail: info@wallace-woodworth.com

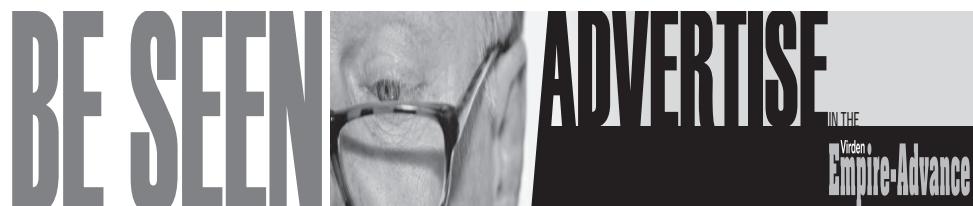
Mail/Drop-off: R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth Municipal Office
154023 PR 257 Box 2200 (Corner of 83 Hwy & PR 257) Virden, MB R0M 2C0

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



Help Wanted



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Senior Election Official (SEO)

The Municipality of Two Borders is accepting applications for the position of Senior Election Official (SEO).

The next municipal election is October 2026.

Position Overview:

The SEO is appointed by the municipal council and is responsible for the general direction and supervision of the municipal election process. This includes ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation, managing election logistics, and maintaining the integrity of the electoral process.

Key Responsibilities:

- Interpret and apply The Municipal Act and relevant election regulations.
- Prepare and maintain the list of voters.
- Provide public notice of nominations and elections.
- Receive and verify nomination papers.
- Appoint and train election officials.
- Establish and equip voting places.
- Oversee advance voting and election day operations.
- Ensure proper vote counting and reporting of results.
- Conduct by-elections if required.

Qualifications:

- Strong organizational and communication skills.
- Ability to work independently and exercise sound judgement.
- Familiarity with municipal governance and election procedures.
- Must be non-partisan and maintain confidentiality.
- Previous experience in election administration is an asset.

Terms & Compensation:

- Appointment begins upon passing a council by-law.
- Hours vary, with peak activity in the months leading up to and during the election (typically Sept-Oct).
- Compensation dependent on skills and experience.

Application Process:

Interested individuals should submit a resume outlining relevant education and experience by February 27, 2026, to:
Grace Carr, Chief Administrative Officer
Municipality of Two Borders
Box 429, 138 Main Street, Melita, MB R0M 1L0
Ph: 204-522-3263 ~ Email: info@twoborders.ca



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Full Time Municipal Employee/Grader Operator

The Municipality of Two Borders would like to invite applications for a permanent full-time **Municipal Grader Operator**. Preference will be given to the applicants who possess the following qualifications:

- Valid Class 5 driver's licence.
- Must be self-motivated and able to work individually.
- Ability to handle all duties associated with this position.

Duties to include equipment operation, public works, and other duties as delegated by the Foreman.

This position is anticipated to commence on or about March 31, 2026. Wages are negotiable depending on qualifications and/or experience.

Deadline for applications will be February 19, 2026, at 4:30 PM.

Please forward your resume to the CAO, Grace Carr
Municipality of Two Borders,
P.O. Box 429, Melita, Manitoba, R0M 1L0
or by email to cao@twoborders.ca
or info@twoborders.ca.

Only those applicants chosen for interviews will be contacted.

Help Wanted



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Seasonal Full Time Municipal Sprayer Operator

The Municipality of Two Borders is seeking a flexible, enthusiastic individual to fill the position of Weed Supervisor, responsible for overseeing the municipality's weed control program from April to October.

Qualifications:

- Valid Class 5 driver's licence.
- Acquire and maintain all necessary pesticide use permits and applicators licenses.
- Ability to manage administrative duties associated with this position.

The following qualifications would be considered an asset:

- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Prior experience with spray equipment operation and maintenance

Wages are negotiable depending on qualifications and/or experience.

Applications will be reviewed starting January 30, 2026; however, this posting will remain open until a suitable candidate is located.

To Apply:

Please forward your resume to
Grace Carr, CAO
Municipality of Two Borders
PO Box 429, Melita, Manitoba, R0M 1L0
or by email to cao@twoborders.ca.

Only those applicants chosen for interviews will be contacted.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Municipality of Two Borders would like to invite applications for:

3 Seasonal Full Time Mower Operators

Qualifications: Ability to operate a tractor and a commercial ditch mower, perform minor repairs to equipment, operate two-way radios and other communication equipment. Ability to conduct pre-operational checks on equipment, clean and lubricate equipment. Ability to take direction from the Foreman and to work alone.

Pre-requisite: Valid driver's licence.

Hourly wage: Wage Negotiable, approximately 50 hours per week.

Anticipated start date is approximately June 2, 2026.

Applications will be accepted until January 30, 2026, or until suitable candidates are found. We appreciate your interest in this position, however, only those applicants chosen for an interview will be contacted.

To obtain more information and a complete job description contact the CAO Grace Carr at 204-522-3263 or inquire by email at info@twoborders.ca or cao@twoborders.ca.

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SPORTS

DUNCAN ENJOYING TIME SPIKING WITH COUGARS



PHOTOS BY ASSINIBOINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE COUGARS
Halle Duncan has earned a role on the Assiniboine Community College volleyball team.

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The support of her parents helped Reston's Halle Duncan earn an opportunity to play college volleyball.

The daughter of Stacey and Melissa Duncan is in her first season with the Assiniboine Community College women's volleyball team. The Brandon-based school squad competes in the Manitoba Colleges Athletic Conference.

Regarding her parents, Duncan said, "They have supported me in playing volleyball a bunch over the years. They always encouraged me to be the best player I could be on and off the court. I am grateful that they were able to work in my vol-

leyball schedule into their already busy schedules. They also pushed me to take and consider any opportunities that came my way through the sport."

Duncan, who is studying business administration, said, "What I've enjoyed most so far about playing with ACC is getting to know all the girls on the team and getting the chance to practice and play with some great people."

Duncan often played in the middle in high school. At the 2024 girls A high school provincial tournament, she was an All-Star and helped the Reston Tigers to a second-place finish. With the ACC Cougars, Duncan is being used mainly on the right side. Head coach Kevin Neufeld noted, "Halle can also be effective in the middle."

"Halle has a good presence at the net and is adjusting well to hitting the long set," the coach said.

As well as adapting to a different position, Duncan has had to adjust to a different style of play in the MCAC. She said, "I would say that college volleyball definitely has a faster pace of play than high school and club volleyball."

Duncan played for the Virden-based Club West Rage in the 15U and 18U ranks. Last season, the Rage won the 18U provincial title. Duncan earned tournament All-Star honours. She said, "When playing for Club West, I really enjoyed the players and coaches that made it a great atmosphere to learn and grow within the sport."

Duncan said she first started seriously playing volleyball in Grades 9 and 10. She said, "What I love most about playing is it's a fun, competitive way to stay active and knowing that your teammates share the same goal to do the best we possibly can every game."



Halle Duncan serves in college volleyball action.

OIL CAPS START NEW YEAR IN STYLE WITH BIG WINS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Oil Capitals returned to the ice in style.

Coming back from the Manitoba Junior Hockey League's Christmas break, the local team posted a pair of dominant road wins. It downed the Northern Manitoba Blizzard 7-2. Then rookie goalie Micky Gross made 29 saves as Virden shut out the Swan Valley Stampeders 7-0. Oak Lake Beach's Tyson Draper netted a hat trick. The victories improved Virden's record to 18-10-1-0.

"I liked our approach to both games," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "It's not easy coming off a significant break and we only got one practice in before playing back-to-back games, and I thought we navigated through it really well. Always nice to come back with four points from that trip."

The Oil Capitals hosted the Waywayseecappo Wolverines on Jan. 8 after the Empire-Advance deadline. The Portage Terriers visit on Jan. 11.

Oil Caps 7, Blizzard 2

On Jan. 3 in The Pas, the Oil Caps lit the lamp five times in the second period on their way to a 7-2 victory in their first game of 2026. The contest was tied at 1-1 after the first period. In the second, Liam Goertzen and Noel Englot each scored to put Virden on top 3-1. The Blizzard got one goal back, before the Oil Caps scored three more before the period ended. Brooks Siemens, London Hoilett (who scored in the first period), and Bryan Laing had Virden's goals. Hoilett and

Siemens both scored on power play opportunities. Defenceman Nate Schaefer recorded three assists in the second frame.

"I think we came in with the mindset of getting pucks to the net and crashing hard after our last game in that rink," said Schaefer, alluding to an October shutout loss. "We started getting more pucks on net and testing their goalie a lot more and the goals followed. Proud of the guys and our effort the first couple games back from break."

Laing got his second of the night in the third to cap the game's scoring. Hoilett had three points on the night and was named the game's First Star. Captain Ty Plaisier was the Second Star. Virden goalie Braxton Burden made 26 saves.

Matthew Bradley started in net for the Blizzard. He made 24 saves on 30 shots. Keagin Kelln allowed one goal on 10 shots. Owen Wilkinson and Carson Meyer, the game's Third Star, scored for the hosts.

Oil Caps 7, Stampeders 0

Gross earned his first MJHL shutout on Jan. 4. His strong performance included stopping a penalty shot and earned him the Third Star.

"Micky had arguably the best game of his season on Sunday," Ramsey said. "He was excellent positionally, he was big in the net and challenged shooters and did a really good job controlling rebounds. A great bounce back game after his last one and a nice one to build some confidence from."

At the other end of the ice, the Oil Caps sent 42 shots at Easton Falls, who stopped 35 of them. Virden led 1-0 after the first period and 3-0 at the second intermission. With his first MJHL hat trick, Draper was named the First Star. He had a

goal in each period.

"I feel like there was excitement getting back onto the ice after the break," Draper said. "Our goal for the weekend was picking up four big divisional points, so we had a lot of intensity going in. My linemates, Bryan Laing and Dysen Drake, played a huge role in my hat trick with them both assisting on all three of my goals. We established a strong forecheck through the weekend and were just moving the puck strongly with each other."

Liam Goertzen scored the Oil Capitals' last two goals. Bryce Bryant found the back of the net in the second period. Schaefer, who finished with two points, scored in the third period. Drake recorded four assists on the night and was the Second Star.

Light, Ulmer, Schaefer Recognized

Moosomin's Marshall Light has been honoured as the Oil Capitals' CD Oilwell Player of the Month for December. The forward scored twice and recorded three assists for five points in six games during the 12th month of 2025. On the Oil Caps' website, Ramsey said, "Marshall is a great asset to our group. He works hard on and off the ice and plays important minutes in all situations."

Rookie forward Tyson Ulmer of Grand Forks, N.D. has been chosen as the team's representative on the RBC - MJHL Community Ambassador Team. The honour recognizes his citizenship and sportsmanship on and off the ice.

Schaefer was tabbed as an MJHL Star of the Week. The Harper Woods, Mich. product had four assists and a goal in the Oil Caps' two victories last week.

SPORTS

A CALL TO REMEMBER: SANHEIM'S OLYMPIC DREAM BECOMES REALITY

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Kent and Shelly Sanheim were going through airport security in Vancouver when they received one of the most memorable phone calls of their lives.

On Dec. 31, Travis Sanheim, one of the Elkhorn couple's sons, called to say he had been selected to compete at the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics as a member of the Canadian men's hockey team. The Sanheims were headed to Calgary to watch Travis' Philadelphia Flyers tangle with the Flames on New Year's Eve. Travis' side of the call, with his mom on speakerphone, was shared on social media. Shelly later posted on social media she had no idea they were being recorded.

"Kent and I were so very excited and happy to hear Travis had been selected to the Team Canada roster for the Olympics in Milan, Italy this February. ... We are thinking it was maybe a blessing that we were in security as you probably would have heard us scream. The emotions were overwhelming and you could hear it in my voice as I spoke to Travis. Both Kent and I were extremely emotional over the course of the day with receiving so much love and support from family, friends and hockey fans from all over."

On a video call with media later in the day, which the Flyers shared online, Travis said that while growing up in Elkhorn, he "never thought that this day would happen." He was pleased to be able to tell his parents before the announcement was made public. The defenceman said on the media call that they have "been a big part of my career. Just a special moment to be able to share the news with them."

The Flyers had played in Vancouver on Dec. 30 and arrived in Calgary in the early morning hours of New Year's Eve. He received the phone call letting him know he made the team just before 8 am Mountain Time. Travis said on the media call, "I'll take the sleepless nights to get a phone call like that."

After the announcement, congratulations flowed in from everywhere. Travis said, on the media call, he had received more than 100 text messages. The Elkhorn District Community Centre posted on Face-

book, "We are so proud of Travis - what an amazing accomplishment and a dream come true!"

"Our little community of Elkhorn and surrounding area have always supported Travis on his hockey journey," Shelly said. "We have always said it takes a village to raise a child, well, we can all say this Olympian now. Travis has had so many important mentors that have shaped the young man that he has grown into. Family, friends and community have been in the forefront of his mentors."

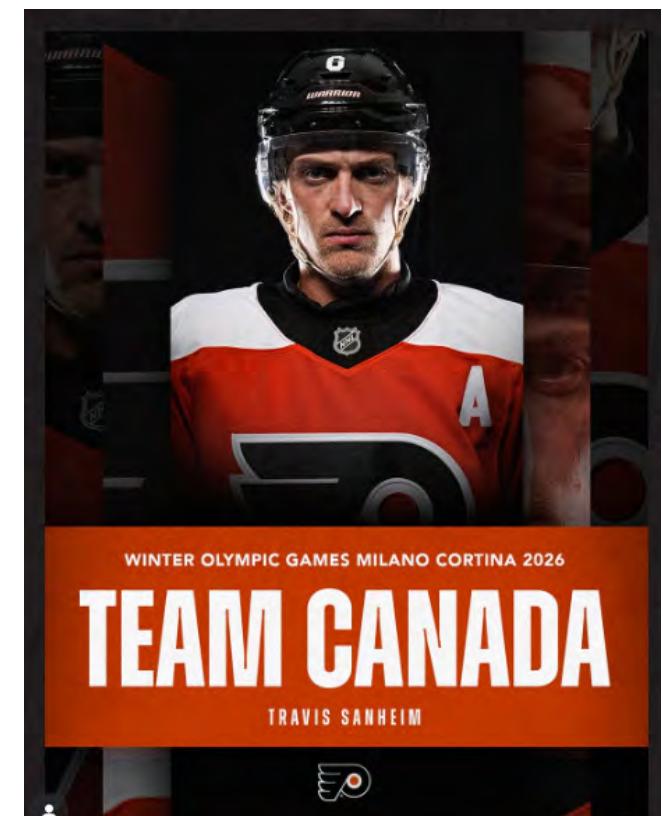
"In saying that, it must also be acknowledged that a lot of hard work, dedication and commitment from Travis and his wife, Alex, has occurred, which has helped Travis continue his hockey success. Travis and Alex are both so passionate about his hockey, their health, and they both love to compete at all sports. That is truly a recipe for continued success."

Travis, now 29, is in his ninth NHL season - all with the Flyers. Many in western Manitoba have followed along as hockey has taken him from the Elkhorn rink to the NHL. They cheered him on as he helped Canada win gold last year at the 4 Nations Face-Off. Now Travis is headed to the Olympics. Miniota's Colby Walker was a teammate of Travis' on the U18 AAA Yellowhead Chiefs. The father of two said:

"Seeing Travis do so well and accomplish so much is very awesome. Small-town boy with dreams. Someone my young kids can look up to. That's for sure."

Shelly said she and Kent "are definitely going to Italy to cheer Travis and Team Canada on." In fact, she said there will be quite a group. Shelly said all of her offspring and their partners will be there: Kali (Brady), Shondalee (Stacy), and Taylor (Tessa). As well, Alex's parents, Rick and Tammy, and her brother Jordan will be making the trip. Shelly explained that two of Travis' closest childhood friends and their partners - Brett Orr (Nicole) and Josh (Tayler) Martin - will also be going.

"This is so exciting for all of us as this truly will be a once in a lifetime experience," Shelly said. "We also know that there will be an amazing support group at home in all the communities surrounding Travis and Alex. Our little community never ceases to amaze us on Travis' hockey journey. They have supported him from NHL Draft Party 2014, to recognizing his ac-



complishments with community signs and decorating houses and businesses in Team Canada decorations during the Four Nations Tournament last February. Many regularly watch his NHL games and cheer him on throughout his NHL season. Travis knows how much his community loves him and he equally shares the sentiment back through trying to give back within the community whenever he can. The Sportsman Dinner last July hosted in Elkhorn truly shows the love that both the community and surrounding area as well as Travis and his wife Alex have for each other. It was a huge fundraiser for our local rink and that truly is where Travis started this journey. We cannot thank the community of Elkhorn and surrounding area enough, especially our local Elkhorn Rink for helping Travis reach this goal. We will all be cheering "Go, Canada, Go."

REF MEMORIES

REF TO WRITER

GERRY NOLAN



When the St. Lazare Outlaws joined the North Central Hockey League, no one knew much about the players on the team. Some of their players had played in Foxwarren in past years so we knew a handful of their roster. I did not know what size their arena was. It turns out it was a small ice surface and the fans seemed to be right on top of you. Back in the day there was no glass around the side of the rink.

I had heard of a handful of players like Danny Tremblay, Martin Dupont, Gil Chartier, and the Haney brothers, Carl, David and Larry! The word was they had some really loud fans which was great, the more noise there was, players tended to play faster.

I decided the only way to find out about the team

was to go to St. Lazare and officiate some of their games.

One of the first guys that I met was Terry Haney, who would be working as one of the two linesmen in the game. I do not remember the other linesmen although it may have been Ray Christy.

Terry was a great linesman and an even better person. He always brought his best to the game and was extremely honest. Terry also had a great sense of humour. If there was trouble on the ice during the game, Terry, when asked, would know what had happened on a particular play. Trust is huge when you are working a game and Terry was someone you could completely trust.

During that first game in St. Lazare there were a couple of incidents where the player from St. Lazare would not be happy about the call I was making and would be speaking in French to me. I did not understand what they were saying to me. Terry would step in and speak to them in French and they would just skate away. I asked Terry what did you say to them? He said you don't understand

French, eh Gerry? I said no I don't! Well he said I swear at them and threaten to tell me what the player said so they would get a misconduct. I just tell them to take a hike or something like that. I got a chuckle out of that.

As I said earlier, Terry was a great guy to work with doing games. Terry was involved in minor hockey, not only in St. Lazare, but in Birtle and Foxwarren. He helped develop young officials in that area. He was a really good teacher and mentor to them. He was instrumental in helping them grow to become top notch officials.

I just recently caught up with Terry and we shared some great memories of games from the past as well as what some of the players on that great team are doing. Most of them are retired, following their grandchildren around.

I really appreciated Terry and all the work he did for hockey around the leagues in western Manitoba.

I would have to say, in some ways Terry was very underrated as an official. For me he was one of the very best I ever worked with!