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NOVEMBER 28, 2025 | EMPIRE: VOL 121 NO 15 / ADVANCE: VOL 140 NO 17 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS

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A VERY VIRDEN CHRISTMAS KICK-OFF PARTY



The memory tree lights shine and Virden Collegiate Institute songsters, and teacher Luke Munchinsky lead in favourite Christmas songs and carols.

Songs and lights commemorate loved ones

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE ADVANCE

Christmas can be painful for those experiencing the loss of a loved one and for that reason, Light Up has

become a yearly observance in towns of Manitoba.

Small lights are passed out to the crowd gathered at the Light Up Memory Tree, a beautiful spruce growing between the Flower Attic and Westland Insurance. Here, families gathered in memory of departed loved ones.

Virden Collegiate choir emerged from a small tent where they took shelter from the gathering breeze to prepare to lead caroling.

On behalf of the Memory Tree committee, emcee Patricia Hole said, "This evening is always a special time for our community, a moment to honour and remember our loved ones together."

She thanked contributors. Through the many \$5 donations



PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

In the Virden branch of Border Regional Library, Mrs. Claus has an eager audience as she reads *Olive, the Other Reindeer* by Vivian Walsh (Author), illustrated by J. Otto Seibold. There were two story times. Kids received a gift bag following story time. Meanwhile in another part, the library book sale is underway.

and other donations, these funds are used to light up the tree and to support improvements at Virden Cemetery.

"This year we have a few projects we're hoping to move forward with, enhancing our memorial book and the signing area, updating the inside of the chapel, and possibly adding some cement pads in front of the columbarium. These improvements help us create a peaceful, welcoming space for all families who come to visit."

Patricia continued, "I would also like to give a heartfelt thank you to the Flower Attic for allowing us to plug into their building all these years. Your support never goes unnoticed."

She noted the Memory Board recording loved ones' names each year, has been renewed.

Mark Gardner prepared the plexiglass cover and Darin Denty made new frames for the board. Bryce Galbraith (Still Water Adventures) supplied the shelter tent for the choir and hot chocolate was provided by Westland Insurance.

Following her words, the VCI choir and teacher, Luke Munchinsky, lead in songs and carols as the Memory Tree sprang to life.



HOME GAME
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29
VS. WINNIPEG
MONARCHS
PUCK DROPS AT 7:30PM

Inside...



NATIONAL
PROTEST **P3**



FARMERS
ADVOCATE **P9-12**

CHILL OUT WITH COOL SAVINGS

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2025
RAM 1500
Tradesman

Was: \$68,280
Savings: -\$9,250
Now: \$59,030



Was: \$67,785
Savings: -\$9,250
Now: \$58,535

2025
RAM 1500
Tradesman

VERY VIRDEN CHRISTMAS PARTY WARMS UP AT BONFIRE



PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

Everyone and their dog, out to the Very Virden Christmas kickoff on Nov. 20 stops at the fire fighters' campfire at Seventh Ave. and Nelson St.



Busy times for Santa with a group of neighbours out on the town on Light Up evening for the Very Virden Christmas party in downtown Virden. It's a lot of fun for the kids, says a parent. Pictures with Santa was hosted by the Very Virden Christmas Committee at the Lions Hall.



In the Workshop at Arts Mosaic kids create Christmas ornaments with glue and glitter.

Volunteers Rally as Christmas Cheer begins hamper season

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

As families fill the Lions Hall for pictures with Santa, Virden Christmas Cheer representatives Kathy Heaman and Lisa Williams are accepting strictly cash donations. On Dec. 15 the Cheer Board will move into the Catholic Parish Hall where food items and gifts for kids will be assembled. The hampers will be delivered on Dec. 18 and 19.

They don't yet know how many hampers they will need until all the applications are in. "We had 140 hampers last year and that was up about 10 from the year before. So, we don't know yet."

Some families have a pet and the Cheer Board, working with the Virden Animal Hospital try to have something for the pet also. "So, when

the applicants phone in, they can tell us what they have for pets and we try to fill it. We don't promise. We say we try."

Applications began on Nov. 17 and close on Dec. 8. Heaman and Williams point people to the advertisement to be sure they get the correct information: "We have the ad coming out in the paper this coming week. It's got all that information in there with the phone numbers and everything and the dates."

Volunteers have always rallied for this cause and again this year, Heaman says, "We have lots of volunteers, so we're lucky. Everybody's very good to come forward and volunteer."

And when it comes to loading the delivery vehicles, Virden Oil Capitals team members help share the load. "They usually come and help with carrying boxes."

Reston Pipestone Pastoral Charge Christmas Cheer Program

"Give, and it shall be given unto you." Luke 6:38

No item donations can be accepted
but monetary donations to this project are welcome.
By cheque payable to (Reston Pipestone Pastoral Charge
Mail to: Box 148, Reston, MB R0M 1X0
Or

By e-transfer to: rucpuc@mymts.net

To apply for a voucher or submit a name of someone you think would qualify
for one, please contact Reston United Church at 204-877-3632
or by email to rucpuc@mymts.net by Dec. 11.
(All information will be kept strictly confidential)

Christmas

RURAL ROAD TRIP

Sunday November 30th

TOUR THE MOST ENCHANTING SHOPS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

FLOWER ATTIC & GIFTS - VIRDEN
CAMPBELL FLOWERS & GIFTS - HAMIOTA
GONE SCRAPPIN' IN BLOOM - ROSSBURN
SAMANTHA'S BOUTIQUE - ELKHORN

INCLUDES:

TRANSPORTATION
COFFEE FROM MJ'S IN VIRDEN
LUNCH AT GONE SCRAPPIN' IN ROSSBURN
EXCLUSIVE COUPONS
YOUR VERY OWN GUIDE!!!!

Tickets \$70 per person

Contact Kelly at 204-859-0028 for tickets

Locals join national protest



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Western Manitoba Farmers Protest group parked along Virden's east frontage road.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

In just two weeks, the Farmers Protest Canada became a movement with participants from the east coast to the west coast.

With Canadian flags and signs on cars and pick-up trucks, on Nov. 22, people from western Manitoba in 10 vehicles met at the Saskatchewan border at 10am for a slow roll to Moosomin and back to Virden. In the early

afternoon they returned to Moosomin to be joined by the Saskatchewan contingent of three tractors, a semi and flat deck, trucks and trailers and passenger vehicles.

On this breezy but sunny day, following the highway protest, the group held a barbecue where about 40 people attended.

A number of RCMP vehicles were posted along the TransCanada Highway. Among the protesters, Nancy Buckley of Oak Lake said an RCMP officer paid them a visit at the

barbecue "just to make sure we knew how to do a legal protest."

A public statement on the Farmers Protest Canada page reads:

"This movement is real, and it does involve Canadian farmers, including those affected at the Universal Ostrich Farm. This is a true grass-roots movement built by everyday Canadians who are standing up against government over-reach. No agenda. No political backing. Just real people demanding fairness and accountability."

While major news outlets seemed to largely ignore the convoys of vehicles around Kelowna, Calgary, a gathering in Ottawa, and in every province, there was citizen coverage. The Virden Empire-Advance went to see what local protestors had to say.

Parked along the frontage road at Virden, Brian Buckley explained their purpose:

"We're just making people aware that we're fed up with the government, with the overreach. The ostrich farm was the last straw for a lot of people. We're disgusted with it."

He said, "I was at that ostrich farm. There was nothing wrong with those birds. And they threatened to put them (owners) in jail and fine them if they had them tested. So right there, that tells you something. Why did the CFIA not want those birds tested by anyone except them. There was a \$200,000 fine and two years in jail if they did it. So that tells you where our government is."

Another couple joining the protest at the Saskatchewan border were from Tilston, Manitoba now, but had come from B.C.

"We came out here to try and get away from the corruption, but, I guess it's Canada-wide."

Not only the recent ostrich farm cull, but the high deficit budget and MP crossing the floor prior to the vote struck them as a betrayal of the Canadian people. The Deep Sky project planned for the RM of Two Borders/Pipestone with a large investment by Bill Gates was on

their minds. "I just hope people start opening their eyes..." said the woman.

Ostrich cull a thorn

On Nov. 6, a CBC headline reads: "Hundreds of ostriches at B.C. farm to be killed after top court dismisses appeal to stop cull"

It said, "Universal Ostrich Farms Inc. went to court to save the birds, but the Supreme Court of Canada's dismissal this morning means the farm is at the end of the legal road."

It was late 2024 when H5N1 avian flu hit and a B.C. farm initially lost 69 birds to avian influenza. But a remaining large flock showed no signs of illness and for months (until the cull at the end of November 2025), remained healthy.

Because of their immunity, the owners said some scientists from abroad, wanted to have the ostrich studied to discover more about immunity to the virus. People from around the world took an interest and the farm had many visitors.

But the CFIA had, many months ago, declared the entire flock of about 300 would be killed.

When the Supreme Court decision dismissed the United Ostrich Farm's appeal, sealing the fate of the ostrich, Sean Fraser, minister of justice and attorney general of Canada was recorded in the CBC piece saying, "We obviously are pleased to see the decision." Backing the CFIA, he said that it was their job to protect the health of consumers and the avian industry.

Conservative MP Scott Anderson represents the ostrich farm's riding. He presented a petition against the cull in the House of Commons in early November. "It goes to underscore the structural need for change in the CFIA," Anderson said. But he did not answer when reporters asked whether he'd asked the government to stop the cull."

Christmas markets and meals



Submitted
By S.A.I.L.

"Aging is an extraordinary process where you become the person you always should have been." David Bowie

The ability to live a full, active, fun, and meaningful life is not for the weak of heart. However, seniors in the Elkhorn area have fully embraced it and made it a priority.

Taking part in several November events, Elkhorn S.A.I.L participants wrapped up the month with a few great gatherings. On Friday, Nov 21, several residents were treated to a great community meal at the Elks Hall. A monthly gathering that provides a great home cooked meal, amazing socialization, and good for the soul entertainment.

Community Meals in Elkhorn will run throughout the winter months, and provides a warm, inviting atmosphere to gather with friends and neighbours. We all know that winter, and holiday months can be lonely for some. Having a place to go, even once a month, where you can get out for a couple of hours, is so very important. There is nothing like a good laugh and a full belly to get you through the chilly days.

Also occurring was a pop-up day at the Elkview Lodge on Monday, Nov 24. Local business owner, Samantha Cluett, held two events in one day for residents of not only the lodge, but their family members or community members. In the morning there was a photo shoot available with a Christmas background and décor. Then in the afternoon a Christmas Market set up in the common room. How wonderful for residents to have a shop come right to their door, literally. It is a wonderful feeling

when small town businesses show up in a big way and the true meaning of community comes shining through.

As we head into December, SAIL Resource Coordinator Karen Mitchell, is asking for your assistance. If you or someone you know would benefit from a one-on-one home visit, please let the office know. "As mentioned previously, the holidays can be a hard and lonely time for some people," explained Mitchell. "Throughout the month of December, I will be focusing less on events, and more on friendly visits. However not limited to those who may be struggling, I am open to visiting anyone in Elkhorn and area. Please feel free to reach out and let me know!"

Additionally, we are planning our Christmas Community Meal for Friday, December 19 at the Elkhorn Legion Hall. Kristina Walker, SAIL Cook will be cooking up a feast of turkey, stuffing, and all the fixings. Sign-up sheets will be around town shortly, and for this event we encourage everyone to sign up early as there won't be any walk-ins accepted. The importance of signing up allows for proper planning and preparation. We appreciate your understanding.

Last, but certainly not least, we would like to extend a huge thank you to local organizations, including; Elkhorn Elks, Elkhorn Legion, and Elkhorn Leisure Centre for allowing us to hold events at your venues free of charge. In providing us this amazing opportunity, it allows SAIL to keep costs down, and in return offer free or affordable events and presentations. Once again, this is the truest gesture of community we could ask for.

24 th ANNUAL
HOOPER'S LAKE BUCKNIGHT

SATURDAY, Nov 29 2025

BEULAH COMMUNITY HALL

6:00PM - MIDNIGHT

ALL HEAD ENTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR GRAND PRIZE DRAW

2025 SEASON HEADS ONLY
ALL HEADS MUST BE LEGALLY TAGGED

~ ALL ENTRIES MUST BE IN BY 8PM ~
HEAD ENTRY \$20 EACH

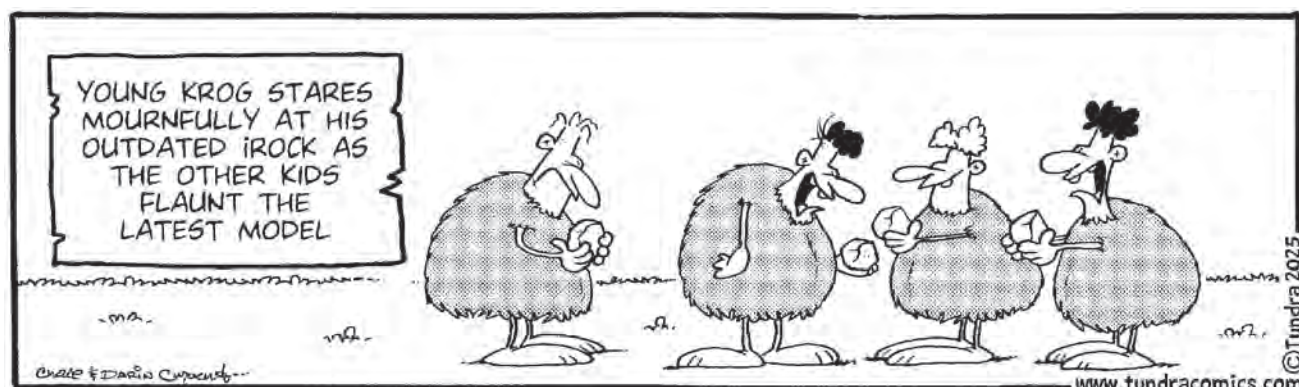
ADMISSION \$15.00 12 & UNDER \$5.00
FOOD INCLUDED WITH ADMISSION

DOOR PRIZE, LIVE & SILENT AUCTIONS
7 Trophy categories: Mens, Ladies, Junior, Ugly & Muley

OFFICIALLY REGISTERED WITH MANITOBA BIG GAME TROPHY ASSOCIATION

Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



When to say yes or no

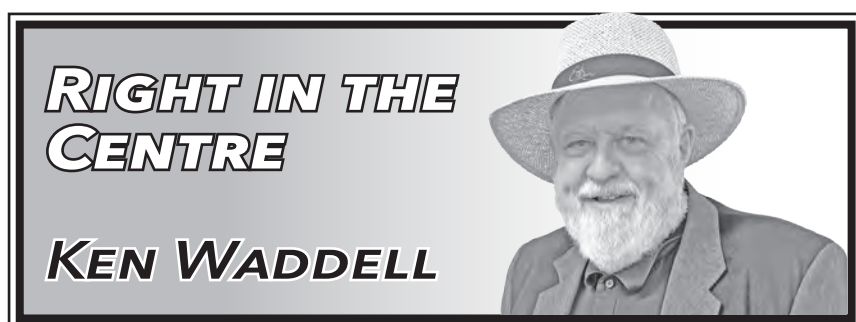
I am launching this week's column with the words of US Senator Marjorie Taylor Greene.

She announced last week that she was resigning from the US Senate, and as soon as she did so, she denied she was planning to launch a bid for the office of President of the United States. Whether she changes her mind or not, her statement and its inherent logic makes a lot of sense. Read through her words, and after that, I will write what I believe—that Greene is right about the US Presidential role, but unfortunately, her words resonate with a lot of other levels of politics.

Greene said, "running for President requires traveling all over the country, begging for donations all day, everyday to raise hundreds of millions of dollars, arguing political talking points everyday to the point of exhaustion, destroying your health and having no personal life in order to attempt to get enough votes to become President all to go to work into a system that refuses to fix any of America's problems. The fact that I'd have to go through all that but would be totally blocked from truly fixing anything is exactly why I would never do it."

Greene said she is "not motivated by power and titles," while arguing that the "Political Industrial Complex has destroyed our country and will never allow someone like me or you to rise to power and actually solve the crises that plague all of us."

I have been involved in all levels of politics for more than 40 years. I have run for office, held office, and observed dozens of politicians from school board members to municipal councillors, MLAs, MPs, Premiers and Prime Ministers. All those years of observation, participating, and



“Big change, which are sometimes needed, are especially difficult to bring into reality.”

reporting have led me to believe that Greene is somewhat correct. Regardless of how hard you try, how much you strive, how much you feel moved to serve and establish new solutions to challenges, it's very difficult to bring about significant change.

Big changes, which are sometimes needed, are especially difficult to bring into reality. Once a person is in office, they soon find out that they are bound by tradition and vested interests. Traditional systems are entrenched, and most people and most organizations don't like change. Sometimes it's fear, sometimes laziness, and sometimes it's simply stubbornly not wanting to do things differently.

But changes are needed, as Greene says to "actually solve the crises that plague all of us." We are all plagued with the need to change, all the while keeping the things that work in place so that chaos doesn't destroy us. It's a finely tuned skill to figure out what

needs to be held dearly and what needs to change.

While Marjorie Taylor Greene is in a somewhat forced transition time in her life, she will, in all likelihood, find a few things to do. So will most of us, and that's what keeps us going. We keep fine-tuning our daily routine so that we can get ahead. That is a truth that should never change, regardless of how old we are.

For all of us, and especially those in elected office, it's important to examine every decision and decide if there's a better way. My response is a resounding yes, there's always a better way to do things, to get through our day and to have an effect on our lives and the lives of those around us. Good enough is not good enough; excellence should always be the goal.

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.

Homebodies

RITA FRIESEN



CBC and me...

The go to station for road trips has been CBC for decades. There are times when I listen to the talking one, and other times when classical music is the only sound- (other than my breathing) filling the space around me. Classical music has always been one of my favourite genres.

Country coming close to being my least fav! With the deep sounds of Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner, Hayden and Vivaldi, and then there's Bach and Mozart...the list goes on, with these sounds my mind refreshes and wanders. There are some composers that cause me to simply follow, that's refreshing. Some trigger deep core memories and that allows me to wander.

It was surprising that one of the movements from a Bach symphony took me way back to a long distance drive with one of my sons. Mark William was an observer of humans and human nature. He was an excellent mimic. At a stop light he observed another driver, across from us, picking their nose. "Going for the gold" he exclaimed. Remember he was young at the time, and human functions can be entertaining and hilarious. Mark William continued. "Stop light activity, watch for it." and he was right! Then he continued on topic, his grandfather was a master nose picker, an open pit miner....remember he was young at the time....these memories brought a smile and the opportunity to reflect on his humour and wit. With a bit of mimicry for added laughter.

There were a number of years when I took piano lessons, for my own enjoyment. The lesson excerpts from classical music scores had me practicing with delight and diligence. Some of the simpler fingering still there. One of my aunts is in her early nineties and music is one of her great gifts. When my sister and I visited her this summer, she is still playing and practicing a classical piece, the goal is to commit it to memory and have her performance critiqued by a professor of music from the university. May it be so. May her love of music continue to bring her comfort and peace. (She is a gifted musician, playing by ear or reading complicated scores. I asked her to play "I Know Whom I Have Believed", one of the songs I have chosen for my graduation service. She asked me to hum the first line, and so I did, in the pitch I am most comfortable with, and she, with just a moment's reflection, executed it perfectly. With a smile, she turned to me and said she had never played it in that key before! A wonderful memory.)

This summer as I was travelling to Gimli to meet my sister and her family, the CBC regular radio was my companion. It turns out that my sister had listened to the same station on her drive up. For a slightly different reason, her car radio had locked in CBC, and she had no choice! It does show it had been listened to before....That day we got to discuss the talk show, hosts and guests that we had both heard. CBC and me.

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Wallace-Woodworth and Town discuss ERCO

RM of Wallace-Woodworth Council meeting Nov. 20

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Joint council meeting

At a joint meeting between the Town of Virden and the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, ERCO's upcoming closure was discussed. The ERCO Hargrave facility has been a large manufacturer and supplier of sodium chlorate, chlor-alkali, and sodium chlorite. Due to major repair costs and equipment failures, the company has decided to shut down the facility.

ERCO contacted the Town to announce the shutdown of their plant in the coming months resulting in the loss of 22 local jobs. The company initially planned to close a different plant but changed direction after equipment

malfunctions requiring high replacement costs at the Virden facility.

The councils expressed concern for the economic and personal impacts, noting that some employees have been there since the facility opened in 2001. Reeve of Wallace-Woodworth, Clayton Canart had asked whether lobbying or municipal support could influence ERCO's decision, but he was told the closure is final.

The joint meeting also discussed working together to reduce mandatory audit costs. Canart said, "We continued discussion on how we're going to do a resolution trying to get the audit costs down for community organizations because it's a growing concern for small budget organizations that have the cost of full audits."

Cemetery Road bridge

In the cemetery road bridge progress update Coun. Lyle Kinnaird said, "I had a local resident comment that they were very impressed how fast it was going and how professionally it seemed to be getting done." CAO Iris Vercaigne added that the girders will be delivered Monday.

Tile Drainage Application

Council reviewed a resolution dealing with a proposed tile drainage project for the SE 4-11-24. The resolution approves the application by Stan Rampton that includes several conditions: execution of a drainage road crossing agreement, directional drilling installation, submission of the water control works licence, the applicant's full responsibility for future relocation

or changes, and compliance with RM of Wallace-Woodworth policy.

Coun. Kinnaird noted that the application lists both Stan Rampton and Keith Gardiner as joint applicants, so both names should be included. Council agreed to the amendment, and the resolution was passed.

Accounts Payable Approval

Council reviewed the accounts and approved general cheques totaling \$1,279,992.87, direct deposits totaling \$3,705.94, for a combined total of \$1,283,698.71. Electronic transfers were also approved in the amount of \$127,245.09.

Carbon Storage Act

Council considered a letter from the Province regarding the Carbon

Storage Act. Reeve Canart said, "They (the province) understand the need for development growth, but need to do their due diligence to make sure that they align with other areas or jurisdictions in the country."

Coun. Kinnaird remarked that while regulations exist for extracting material from the ground, comparable frameworks for injecting material back into the ground may not be in place yet.

LUD Committee reports

Coun. Diana MacDonald reported from the Kenton LUD that picnic tables previously ordered were still delayed but expected for spring. Some tree trimming around town remains to be completed. The committee also reviewed

its 2026 service plan and meeting dates.

In her report from the Wallace Senior Services (WSS) meeting MacDonald said, "At the lunch in October they had 21 at it. They are looking at probably needing more space, so that's a good problem to have." She noted that the November foot clinic had 11 clients booked, and WSS facilitator Cheryl Hill will be going to Winnipeg on Nov. 25 to attend the Victoria Lifeline course. Victoria Lifeline provides medical alert devices to help seniors remain independent at home for as long as possible.

Coun. Denis Lachapelle attended the Elkhorn LUD committee meeting and reported concerns about the shed behind the former office. The committee also reviewed issues with a gazebo's security cameras. A power cord for the cameras had been unplugged by accident and plans have been made to have the camera power supply hard wired.

Town Office: 204-748-2440

Virden Landfill: 204-748-6033

Tundra Oil & Gas Place: 204-748-2736



Animal Control: 204-851-5881

Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440

Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540

Employment Opportunity Executive Assistant

The Town of Virden is currently recruiting for the position of **Executive Assistant**.

This position entails a number of duties, including but not limited to:

- Providing administrative and clerical support to the Chief Administrative Officer and Council
- Policy research and preparation
- Preparation of all Council packages, including agendas
- Website and Facebook maintenance

The successful applicant must possess:

- A grade twelve diploma with relevant post secondary education, or experience
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Working knowledge of computer software systems
- The ability to respect and promote confidentiality
- Experience in a municipal environment is an asset
- A minimum of two years experience in a general office environment

A detailed job description is available at the Town Office or online at www.virden.ca/p/employment-opportunities.

Resumes, addressed to the following, will be accepted at the Town Office:

Rhonda Stewart
Chief Administrative Officer
236 Wellington Street West
Virden, MB, R0M 2C0
Email: cao@virden.ca

Thank you to all who are applying for this position but only those who are selected for the interview process will be contacted. This position will remain open until filled.

Virden Santa Parade

Saturday November 29, starts at 6:00 PM at the Fair Grounds.

Town of Virden Public Water System

For updates on the Town of Virden Public Water System, please visit www.virden.ca or contact the Town Office at 204-748-2440

Happy Holidays!

The Town Office will be accepting:

- toy donations for **Virden Christmas Cheer**, and
- non-perishable food items for the **Virden Food Cupboard**

Donations will be accepted December 12.

2026 Garbage and Recycle Schedules

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

Upcoming Council Meetings

December 2 and 16

Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

Employment Opportunity Detention Guard – RCMP Detachment

For more information please visit www.virden.ca/p/employment-opportunities

HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN’S KITCHEN

Pulses, which include beans, peas and lentils have a rich history of nourishing cultures all over the world. In the 8th century BC they are mentioned in Homer’s ancient Greek poem the Iliad. In many cultures, pulses were considered a staple food, particularly among the poor and working class, due to their affordability and nutritional value. In Costa Rica, Gallo Pinto is a dish of fried black beans and rice with spices, India has Dahl which is a slow-cooked stew of split peas, beans and spices, Israel is known for its Falafel, which is a deep fried ball of smashed chick peas, fava beans and spices and in Finland Hernekeitto Soup is made with ham and green peas. Pulses played an important role in early Canada as well. The early French settlers introduced a hearty pea soup and baked beans were considered a staple for lumberjacks, cowboys and farmers.

The United Nations recognized the importance of pulses, declaring 2016 as the International Year of Pulses. One of the most significant benefits of pulses is their high protein content as well as fiber, complex carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals making them an excellent source of energy and nutrition. They are an important ingredient in vegetarian and vegan diets. So today I offer you two recipes to help you discover the pulse potential for your eating pleasure.

Beany lasagna

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Tbsp. oil | 1 medium onion, diced |
| 1 small stalk celery, diced | 1/2 red pepper diced |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced | 1-796mL can of diced tomatoes |
| 1-156 can of tomato paste | 1-540 mL can of pinto beans |
| 1 cup fresh sliced mushrooms | 1 tsp. dried crumbled oregano |
| 1 tsp. dried crumbled basil | 1 Tbsp. dried parsley |
| 1/2 tsp. each salt and pepper | 1 tsp. sugar |
| 1 cup cottage cheese | 1 egg, beaten |
| 8 cooked lasagna noodles | 2 cups grated mozzarella cheese |

In a Dutch oven heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion, celery, pepper and garlic. Cook until onion is slightly softened. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, beans, mushrooms, herbs, salt and pepper. Cover and bring to a boil. Uncover and let simmer for half an hour. Preheat oven to 350 F (180 C). In a bowl combine cottage cheese and egg. Spread a thin layer of tomato sauce in a 9X13 inch pan. Cover with half the noodles, all the cottage cheese mixture, most of the tomato mixture and 1 cup of cheese. Layer the top with noodles, remaining tomato mixture and the remaining cup of cheese. Bake for 45-60 minutes until heated through and bubbling. Let stand several minutes before serving.

Raisin lentil muffins

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 3/4 cup raisins | 3/4 cup chopped dates |
| 1 1/2 cup water | 1 cup cooked pureed lentil |
| 1/3 cup butter or margarine | 3/4 cup brown sugar |
| 1 egg | 1 tsp. vanilla |
| 1 1/2 cup flour | 1 tsp. baking soda |
| 1 tsp. baking powder | 1/4 tsp. salt |
| 1 tsp. cinnamon | 1/2 tsp. nutmeg |

Preheat oven to 350 F (180 C).In a heavy bottomed pot combine raisins, dates and water. Simmer 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cool for 10 minutes. Add the lentil puree and mix well. In a bowl cream together butter and sugar. Mix in the egg and vanilla. Add the raisin lentil mixture. In another bowl combine the remaining ingredients. Stir in the creamed mixture. Stir just until combined. In paper lined or greased muffin tins, fill each 3/4 full. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean. Enjoy with your favourite people.

Miniota News

Submitted
BY LINDA CLARK

Linda Clark and family and Scott and Donna Gammack, of Garson, Man. attended the surprise retirement supper and evening for their brother Harold Reid held at The Backyard in Brandon, hosted by the Sensus Accounting Firm. Harold is nearing the 50-year mark in the account-

ing business and retires the end of December. Happy retirement Harold!

Dorothy Gow spent an enjoyable week grandparenting Ryleigh, Grace and Shae while their parents Lindsey and Chris Raupers flew to France. A week enjoyed by all!

A beautiful sunny day on Sunday, Nov. 23 brought out 21 vendors and many shoppers

for our annual UCW Christmas Craft Sale at the Miniota Hall. The vendors were most appreciative of our youth who carried in their wares. We hope all vendors had a successful day. The kitchen was busy with UCW members selling soup, sandwiches, dessert and coffee.

“Take care of the soul that takes care of others.” -Mary Davis

Police Report

Westman RCMP Service Report
for Nov. 16 to Nov. 22

Submitted
BY WESTMAN RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 80 calls for service. Some of these calls for service include 25 traffic offences, 6 Mental Health Act, 8 Assault, 2 Suspicious Person, 4 Mischief, 4 Wellbeing Checks, and 4 Uttering Threats, and 2 Operation while Impaired files.

On Nov. 20, Westman received an update through Emergency Medical Services that there was an individual in the Settlement of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation who had been stabbed. RCMP attended and the suspect had fled the scene prior to arrival. The victim was treated on scene and statements were taken. The suspect that was identified was a female youth later located and placed under arrest. She was remanded into custody and will attend court on numerous charges this month including Assault with weapon, assault causing bodily harm and two counts of failing to comply with a probation order.

On Nov. 20, Westman RCMP received a dispatch call regarding an impaired motor vehicle collision in the Town of Virden. A 36-year-old male was the single occupant of the vehicle that struck a tree. He was able to get the vehicle out of the ditch and fled the scene, witnesses were able to provide a description to RCMP, the vehicle and driver were located in the Town of Virden and the 36-year-old male was placed under arrest. He was charged with Operation while impaired (alcohol) of a motor vehicle. Breath samples provided of 160mg%. The driver was released on an Appearance notice, and the vehicle was impounded, he will appear in court in January.

On Nov. 21, during routine traffic patrols within the RM of Pipestone, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a

high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 120km/hr in a 90 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. RCMP also observed a second vehicle in the RM of Pipestone travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 136km/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 \$521.

On Nov. 22, during a routine traffic patrol within the town of Melita, RCMP initiated a traffic stop and the driver was issued two Traffic Offence Notices one for Driving without motor vehicle liability insur-

ance, which carries a fine of \$672, and another Traffic Office Notice for Driving without holding a valid driver’s licence which carries a fine of \$298.

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 tipline is not traceable and they do not subscribe to caller ID or call display.

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Carney's Conflicts Exposed

Submitted

By CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Ottawa, ON — Michael Barrett, Conservative Shadow Minister for Ethics and Accountable Government, released the following statement on the revealing committee testimony about the millions of dollars Mark Carney will receive from Brookfield as performance pay:

"Today, Brookfield COO Justin Beber confirmed that 95 per cent of Brookfield-owned and operated companies are not included in Mark Carney's ethics screen. That's 1,900 other companies that will enrich Prime Minister Mark Carney if they perform well.

"Canadians also discovered that the senior Brookfield executive flew to meet Mr. Carney in the Prime Minister's Office in Ottawa this October. Beber said he 'took the afternoon off' to lobby the Prime Minister on issues he claimed weren't Brookfield-related. But this private meeting with a Brookfield executive didn't trigger the ethics screen — the opposite of what the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff and the Clerk of the Privy Council said should happen.

"There appears to be a pattern of Mr. Carney granting preferential access to his Brookfield executives. In April, Brookfield subsidiary North River Midstream lobbied him

directly. In August, Carney met the CEO of Brookfield Infrastructure, Sam Pollack, in Washington, DC.

"Mr. Sabia and Mr. Blanchard, the two individuals responsible for Prime Minister Carney's 'conflict of interest screen,' do not have the list of investments held by the Brookfield Global Transition Fund, which is directly tied to Mr. Carney's performance pay from Brookfield. They also do not know the full list of companies or businesses that have the largest impact on Mr. Carney's future Brookfield payouts.

"What's worse is that both Mr. Blanchard and Mr. Sabia can be fired by the Prime Minister for any reason, giving them an incentive to act in Mr. Carney's interest. That might be why Mr. Sabia told the committee that even if there is overlap between Brookfield's investments in modular housing and the government's support for modular homes, they wouldn't be subject to a conflict of interest screen — despite the decision benefiting Mr. Carney's future performance pay.

"Mr. Sabia already made clear in his testimony that he couldn't do his own job of managing Mr. Carney's conflicts without selling his Brookfield assets. Yet the Prime Minister is keeping his assets from Brookfield despite being able to make political decisions that affect Brookfield's profits. Beber also confirmed that the Prime Minister could have liquidated his Brookfield assets, including stock options and deferred shares.

"Last month, expert testimony at the Ethics Committee revealed shortcomings in the Conflict of Interest Act that allow the Prime Minister to make decisions that benefit Brookfield and, by extension, his shares, options and



PHOTO FROM WIKIPEDIA

Prime Minister Mark Carney.

performance pay. The testimony from the Clerk of the Privy Council, the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff and the Chief Operating Officer of Brookfield confirm that the so-called ethics screen is not catching anything.

"Canadians should know that their leaders will govern in pursuit of the national interest, not personal gain. It is now clearer than ever that the only way Canadians can have confidence in Mark Carney is for him to sell all of his shares, options and performance pay from Brookfield. Anything less means Carney is putting personal profits before Canadians' trust."

Council recognizes citizens, indemnities approved

Town of Virden council meeting Nov. 18

By Dale Davison

EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Porter family recognized

Before proceeding with regular business Coun. Marc Savy said, "I want to take this opportunity to recognize Cheryl Porter and her husband, Corporal Al Porter, former RCMP. On October 30th Cheryl received the silver medal of the Memorial Cross for the sacrifice and contribution made by her son, Corporal Chris Porter, who served with the 2nd Regiment, Princess Patricia, Canadian Light Infantry at CFB Shilo.

Corporal Porter died in January 2021 after suffering for years with war injuries sustained between 2003 and 2005 during deployment in Bosnia. I personally, and I'm sure the rest of Council, would like to thank Cheryl and family for their service to Canada."

Council Indemnity

The Council Indemnity Policy states that indemnity rates must be reviewed annually and adjusted based on Manitoba's Consumer Price Index and for the coming year (2026), the

increase is 3 per cent. This adjustment affects indemnities for the mayor, deputy mayor, and councillors.

The mayor will see an increase of \$596.66 for a total of \$20,485.46. The deputy mayor indemnity will increase by \$511.46 and total \$17,560.66. Councillors will increase by \$426.19 to total \$14,632.64

The indemnity by-law received first and second readings, with motions carried.

RCMP report

Sergeant Amy Doan delivered the monthly RCMP report to council, covering Oct. 1–31. She outlined the Operation Impact initiative, a province-wide traffic enforcement. She said, "It's not just geared to impaired operation, but it also targets aggressive driving, distracted driving and other various offenses. We participated in that within the detachment area."

Extra patrols were conducted on Halloween, which, despite falling on a Friday, saw little mischief and few calls. The detachment lodged two prisoners during the month. Mental Health Act files increased slightly to

nine. There were 103 calls for service in October, approximately 40 of them traffic related. Comparing calls for service to the previous year, October 2024 saw 86 calls, but the municipality remains below year-to-date totals at 922 files.

Sergeant Doan explained staffing issues. Four of the five regular members assigned to the Virden Town contract are not operational. One remains suspended and one constable is on paternal leave, scheduled to return to full operational duties in December. Another constable is on a graduated return-to-work arrangement and is working increased operational hours, attending calls and taking part in shifts, though not yet fully operational. Another member is

working under an administrative restriction and is therefore non-operational, though still working in an administrative role at the detachment.

Despite these absences, the detachment has adjusted scheduling to maintain service. Doan said, "We've changed our operational schedule. It does not reduce coverage, but it actually complements the coverage, so that service delivery is still maintained within the Town of Virden." A shift model change—from a 12-member/10-hour shift with on-call, to a 7-member rotation—has improved coverage. With eight members available overall, the new schedule allows the detachment to avoid any gaps in service to the Town.

Coun. Savy asked

whether members are experiencing stress due to overwork. Sgt. Doan said, the previous schedule created difficulties due to last-minute shift changes and switches from days to nights. She added, "I'm really hopeful that the schedule change is going to balance people's lives — give them days off but also maintain service delivery. And I think we're going to see that for the month of December."

Airport

Council discussed the remaining funds that have been held back to correct any deficiency at the Virden Regional Airport. Most issues have been addressed; however, repainting of incorrect lines must be completed in spring 2026. Council approved the release of \$16,500 of the deficiency holdback to Russell Ready Mix while retaining \$3,500

to cover next spring's repainting work.

The airport lighting system is fully operational, and all components are connected except for the AWOS freezing-rain sensor.

Gas installation for the generator is expected very shortly. A new gas boiler located in the maintenance shed is ready but requires the gas connection to be activated.

Water Utility

The water system continues to function well. Staff are awaiting analytical results from a water sample taken Nov. 6 from production well #2. The new well—production well #3—entered operation on Nov. 10, and its first treated sample was collected on Nov. 14. That sample was submitted to the ALS water testing lab in Winnipeg with an urgent designation.

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Oak Lake Christmas Parade



PHOTOS BY OLIVER NOLAN
Valleyview Co-op displayed their beautiful Christmas float at the November 22 Oak Lake Christmas Parade.



Santa arrived at the Christmas Parade in Oak Lake.

Judy Podobni received award



SUBMITTED PHOTO
On November 12 at the Lieutenant Governor's house in Winnipeg 36 medics from the province received 20-year medals and 30- and 40-year bar awards. Judy Podobni (centre) received her 40-year bar. EMS Exemplary Service Medal recognizes professionals in the provision of pre-hospital emergency medical services to the public, who have preformed their duties in an exemplary manner, characterized by good conduct, industry and efficiency.

From the prairies to the highland tour 204 - Part 13

By Gerry Nolan
RIVERS BANNER

Saturday, August 16 was a very special day in two ways, our visitor from London Andrea Tolton arrived at around 2 in the afternoon. Andrea is the youngest daughter of the late Claude and Shirley Tolton. Donald drove to meet her at the train station in Markinch. Andrea is a childhood friend of Brin and Devon. We were all looking forward to meeting her.

While Donald travelled to meet her, some of the men and Julie went fly fishing with James Barclay, Donald's cousin. The girls were doing yoga out on the lawn as it was a beautiful day. The other special event of the day was our (travel guru's) birthday. Yes, it was Devon's birthday! We planned more of a quiet day at our Ladywell house to celebrate Devon's

birthday. We planned a barbeque of hamburgers, sausage and oven roasted spuds and vegetables. We went to the store and brought cake and pink iced donuts for dessert. We would be celebrating another birthday the next day as well. Gerry and Eric did the barbequing while Celia and Leith did the cooking in the AGA oven. Supper was a (Canadian) summertime meal followed by a gift opening. Refreshments flowed to extremes that evening! Some were in bed early while others stayed up celebrating into the wee hours of the morning, like four o'clock. I was told there was singing and other activities going on with some humorous videos taken to be shown the next day. There was also a report of some of Princess Diane's hair resurfacing!

The next morning, after cleaning up the evidence from the night

before, the group was hastily getting some breakfast before we prepared for another special day. It was Freya's seventh birthday! Devon had planned a wonderful day for her and for the rest of the ladies for that matter.

After having a breakfast of pink donuts, and a flurry of gift opening for Freya the women of our merry band, donned their finest as they were off to have (High Tea) at St. Andrews. We were being treated to this honour at the golf course's elegant restaurant. After being seated at the perfectly set table and offered a free glass of champagne, Freya had her own non-alcoholic champagne served in a flute exactly the same as ours.

Plates of assorted finger sandwiches, tiered cake stands with yummy dainties, and specialty cups of tea were provided for us.

After indulging in



Freya on her birthday at St. Andrews

these delicacies, we met up with the men at another pub in the grounds where the men had lunch and the ladies another drink. While the ladies were having (High Tea) the men were treated to a tour of St. Andrews golf course courtesy of James Barclay. Next week I will share how the men spent their day while the ladies were having tea!

Farmers' Advocate



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PHOTO BY JODI BAKER

This end of day, end of harvest scene was captured by Jodi Baker Photography. This sunset was seen by many readers as they drove by the harvest fields of western Manitoba. The harvest went well from an operational point of view and yields were reported to be mostly good. Those interested in purchasing this, or other works can learn more by checking out Jodi Baker Photography on Facebook or by contacting baker.jodi@icloud.com

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Manitoba Beef Producers: An update on the livestock services file

By Matthew Atkinson
MANITOBA BEEF PRODUCERS

Being not that many months away from the Manitoba Beef Producers' Annual General Meeting (AGM) in February, I thought I would both reflect upon the big discussion and decision around livestock inspection and give you an update on the progress since last year's AGM.

First off, I think it's important to say that in no way did we set out with an agenda to create an expansion of livestock inspection services in Manitoba. After hearing a lot of feedback from producers, marketers and lenders about lack of security around livestock ownership in Manitoba, we set forth to investigate what options were available. At this point, I would really like to acknowledge the great input we received from the other western provinces on how their systems worked, what they were happy with and what they would change.

Following a number of meet-

ings and conversations, the very strong and unanimous feedback we received was that inspection works, it provides value that far exceeds the cost of the service and, it needs to be province-wide and mandatory. We also learned about how many cattle in Manitoba on which an inspection fee is already being paid, with them being inspected after the sale is made when they are destined to go to one of the western provinces. Now that inspection fee may not always be directly seen by the Manitoba seller, however, it is being factored into the sale price. The unfortunate part is that it is not bringing value to that Manitoba producer, due to the fact there is currently no detailed legislative or regulatory framework over Manitoba-owned cattle should a question about ownership arise. With all the information we had before us, no matter how many different ideas we kept batting around between us, it kept pointing back to expanded inspection being the only real solution, especially

when inspection was already occurring on so many of these western-bound cattle.

We also looked long and hard at the designated roles within the RCMP – staff dedicated to investigating livestock-related crimes such as fraud and theft -- that British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan have. While this approach is very important, and something that we clearly need here in Manitoba, the feedback from the RCMP officers in those roles in all three provinces was clear: they cannot do their job without having a livestock inspection service to work with. Additionally, knowing that after many years of delay, the new federal livestock traceability regulations are likely coming into force very soon, we see the value that could be brought by having an inspection service doing a portion of the movement reporting on the producers' behalf.

Once MBP's board of directors reached this conclusion, we decided that due to the complex nature of the how and why we

got there, we felt the need to go beyond regular district meetings and hold some town hall-style meetings in some regions less covered by that year's district meetings. At these meetings producers had a chance to better understand what livestock inspection really means and to voice any concerns.

We appreciate everybody who came out and engaged in person, spoke to us for more information and came out to our February 2025 AGM, where we saw a resolution on livestock inspection carried with a strong majority.

As a refresher, that resolution stated as follows: "Therefore be it resolved to recommend that Manitoba Beef Producers now ask the Government of Manitoba to work with value chain members to take the necessary steps needed to implement mandatory livestock inspection in Manitoba, including: making required legislative and/or regulatory changes; working with the prospective delivery agent on a service agreement;

determining if funding can be secured to help offset the cost of an expanded inspection system; deciding whether an investment can be made to support the creation of a Livestock Investigations Unit; and, any other steps required to move this initiative forward in the most responsive, efficient and cost-effective manner."

Following the AGM, we formed a working group, with members of our MBP board, reps from the Manitoba Livestock Marketing Association, producers at large and, in a non-voting seat, a representative from Manitoba Agriculture. The Manitoba Livestock Inspection Working Group's job is to try and work through establishing expanded inspection services and therefore it is important we have the diverse industry representation we do have. This consists of commercial cow-calf, purebred, feedlots, auction marts and order buyers.

Continued on next page



A group photo of the Journey Wealth team, consisting of seven people (three men and four women) dressed in professional business attire. They are posed in two rows, with three people seated in the front and four standing behind them. The background is a light-colored wall with the "JOURNEY WEALTH" logo.

Meet the Journey Wealth team, coming soon to Carberry.

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The logo for Journey Wealth, featuring a stylized white arc above the words "JOURNEY WEALTH" in a serif font.



Mandatory inspection services requested by Manitoba Beef Producers

Continued from previous page

The first big task before us has been looking into our existing provincial legislative and regulatory framework and what we would like updated versions of these to say when it comes to livestock inspection and key pieces such as demonstrating ownership of cattle. This is of course a lengthy and detailed process that is now handed off to the province for drafting of those pieces.

As noted, one of the other benefits livestock inspection can provide is movement reporting for the new traceability regulations, expected to come into force in the next couple of years. As part of that, it will be necessary to have complete records for livestock being transported, meaning manifests and animal transport records/transfer for care. Our goal in establishing mandatory inspection services in Manitoba is at the outset to go directly to a digital platform for inspectors inputting information, rather than face the slow and uphill battle some other provinces are experiencing as they transition from paper to a digital platform. Our hope is to have a digital manifest platform available for producers to use that would be

able to directly input that information, saving a lot of work and expense in the long-term. This of course is a lot easier and more valuable than a stack of paper records when issues arise and information needs to be looked back upon, such as during an animal disease investigation or if a suspected case of cattle theft or fraud has arisen.

At this point, the exact timeline to move to mandatory inspections is not yet known. As with all legislative or regulatory changes in Manitoba, these will be up for public comment and that is something we will see at some point and feedback from that can affect those timelines.

Regardless of a coming into force date, our hope, if possible, would be a few months of an education and awareness prior to inspection being fully enforced so that all members of the beef value chain can become aware of what is involved and their respective responsibilities. As always, MBP directors and staff want to hear from you on topics such as livestock inspection, so please feel free to reach out to discuss it more.

WESTERN CANADA'S
LARGEST
CARDLOCK
NETWORK

A photograph of a red semi-truck parked at a CO-OP Cardlock fuel station. The station has a large canopy with the CO-OP Cardlock logo. A person is standing near the truck. The background shows a clear blue sky.

The CO-OP logo, featuring the word 'CO-OP' in a stylized font inside a hexagonal shape.

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The Stride Credit Union logo, featuring the word 'Stride' in a large, stylized font with 'CREDIT UNION' underneath.

A photograph of the Stride Credit Union Carberry branch building. It is a modern, single-story building with large windows and a blue accent wall. A red location pin icon is overlaid on the image.


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CO-OP AGRO

SPORTS

OIL CAPS ROOKIE DESCHAMPS IMPRESSES WITH HOCKEY IQ

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

A pair of Virden rinks made it to the semifinals of the Manitoba Curling Tour Shootout on home ice.

At the Nov. 21-23 men's event at the Virden Curling Club, the Jace Freeman and Jay Kinnaird rinks both finished first in their respective pools. The Tanner Lott rink of Winnipeg defeated Brandon's Steve Irwin in the final 8-2.

"It's always great to host competitive curling at the club. It was nice seeing several local fans out watching, and especially seeing the local teams do well," said Kinnaird, who praised the staff and volunteers for "running another solid event."

His rink featured Branden Jorgensen, Chris Kinnaird, and Brooks Freeman. It went 3-1 in pool play and fell 5-3 to Lott in the semifinals.

Freeman's rink was a perfect 4-0 in its pool. His teammates are Dallas Burgess, Ryan Ostrowsky, and Aaron Macdonell. Freeman lost 5-2 to Irwin in the semifinal.

"We knew Steve's team would be tough on Sunday after they didn't play their best against us the day before in the round robin," Freeman said. "They are the top dogs in the Westman area, so we knew we probably wouldn't get a bad game out of them twice in a row. It was awesome to go through the round robin undefeated as we continue to build as a new team, and it's great that we're starting to see lots of good results in our bonspiels lately."

The MCT Shootout was the final event of the tour schedule. The top two eligible teams on the MCT points list - Lott and Braeden Calvert - received berths into the Bunge Championship, the men's provincial bonspiel. Freeman's rink narrowly missed out on a berth.

Skate Virden

A number of Skate Virden athletes have earned presti-

gious spots in Skate Manitoba programs. Team Manitoba includes Nate Greenbank and Ainslee McGregor, as well as Breken Brezden, who previously trained in Virden. On Skate Manitoba's development-focused Team Toba are Luke Greenbank, Mia du Plessis, and Kaylee Malcolm.

Kreutzer Wins

In late October, Oak Lake's Jesse Kreutzer defeated Winnipeg's Simon Federkevick in the 70-kilogram category at the Brandon Fitness Combat Academy's Fall Brawl Boxing Event. The victory was the fourth of Kreutzer's career. Kreutzer's uncle, Kenn, also had a sparring match during the event.

Kozma Breaks Record

Former Virden Oil Capitals goalie Kyle Kozma recently broke Trine University's career shutout record. As of Nov. 24, he had nine shutouts. Kozma set the record with a 25-save performance in a 4-0 win over University of Dubuque Spartans. Kozma is in his fourth season at the Angola, Ind. school. The Thunder play at the NCAA Division III level. Kozma played in Virden for parts of the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 seasons.

Worthington Selected

Virden Oil Capitals forward Colten Worthington has been selected to play for Team Canada West at the Junior



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Winnipeg rink of Tanner Lott, Riley Smith, Adam Flatt, and Justin Twiss won the Manitoba Curling Tour Shootout.

A World Challenge.

The prestigious event will be held in Trois-Rivières, Que., from Dec. 7-13. Team Canada West, Team Canada East, the United States, and Sweden will compete for the championship, with the title game broadcast live on TSN.

An 18-year-old from Brandon, Worthington has four goals, 17 assists, and 21 points in 16 games with Virden this season. This is his first Manitoba Junior Hockey League campaign after spending last season with the Western Hockey League's Saskatoon Blades.

OIL CAPITALS READY FOR BUSY SCHEDULE

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Oil Capitals only had one game last week, but they are now entering a busy part of their schedule.

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League squad fell 2-1 on the road to Winkler on Nov. 22. They were to play in Selkirk on Nov. 18, but it was postponed due to unforeseen circumstances.

Starting this week, the Oil Capitals are slated to play four games in the span of seven days.

They hosted the Niverville Nighthawks on Nov. 27 after the Empire-Advance deadline. The Winnipeg Monarchs visit on Nov. 29. The Oil Caps host the Selkirk Steelers on Dec. 2. On Dec. 3, they are in Dauphin.

"I know we are looking forward to playing a little more, as our schedule has

been fairly light," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "It will be nice to get into a rhythm of playing a little more often. We will focus on one game at a time."

Community Involvement

While the Oil Capitals only had one game last week, that does not mean they were not busy. As usual, the players were helping out in the community in various ways. For example, they helped decorate Holiday Smile Cookies at Tim Hortons. In addition, the players assisted at the Kickoff to Christmas - Very Virden Christmas downtown events.

"It's awesome helping out in the community," assistant captain Noel Englot said. "We get to meet a lot of people that support our team and it makes us feel like we are making a difference in

the community as kids look up to us, asking for autographs, which makes it even more special."

Stats Leaders

As of Nov. 25, hometown product Bryce Bryant paced the Oil Capitals with 31 points in 21 games. The talented forward's point total placed him ninth in the MJHL scoring race with everyone ahead of him having played more games. Bryant led the Oil Caps in assists with 21. He was tied for second in the league in that category. Bryant's 11 power-play assists placed him fourth in the league.

London Hoilett paced the Oil Caps with 12 goals in 19 games. He was 11th in the MJHL in goals.

Hometown captain Ty Plaisier led his team in blue line points with 17. He was eighth among MJHL defencemen. The physical presence also had a team-high 48 penalty

minutes.

Colten Worthington was second on the team with 21 points in 16 games. His 17 assists placed him 10th in the league.

Cohen Lewko was Virden's top rookie scorer. He had 13 points and eight goals in 17 games. Lewko was fifth among MJHL first-year players in points and third in goals.

Goalie Braxton Burdeny had seven wins. His 2.63 goals against average placed him sixth in the MJHL among qualified goalies. Oil Caps rookie Micky Gross has five wins and a 2.17 GAA.

Flyers 2, Oil Caps 1

On the road, the Oil Capitals trailed the host Flyers 1-0 and 2-0, respectively, at the intermissions. Virden defenceman Mad-dox Shindle scored his first goal of the year in the third period, but the Oil Caps were unable to tie things up.

"I thought our game was a little inconsistent," Ramsey said. "We didn't get off to a great start then got our legs under us towards the end of the first. The second period was not how we want to play. They were faster and more physical than we were. The third period was better and I thought we had some good looks but couldn't come up with a goal to tie the game. We need to be more consistent from puck drop."

Braxton Burdeny made 30 saves on 32 shots for the Oil Capitals. The goalie was backed up by Virden's own Brodie Cameron. Cameron was called up from the Virden Collegiate Institute high school hockey team.

Flyers goalie Leif Ekblad stopped 44 shots. Charles Bernier and Connor Rieger scored for Winkler. Rieger's goal came on the power play.

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SPORTS

MJHL SEASON UPDATE

MJHL HOCKEY DEREK HOLTOM

Once again it seems the East Division is where the power lies in the MJHL this season.

Heading into the final weekend of November the top four teams in the MJHL were all from the East Division in terms of points. Niverville leads the way with just one loss in 19 games. Steinbach sits just three points back, and Portage and Selkirk (who both see Winkler coming up fast) sitting tied for third just four points out of second place.

The Dauphin Kings and Virden Oil Capitals hold down the top two spots in the West Division and have a better winning percentage than the Selkirk Steelers, but not as many points.

The hottest team in the MJHL continues to be the Niverville Nighthawks, winners of 12 straight heading into the weekend, and winners of 14 straight after following weekend wins against the Stampers and Blizzard.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Northern Mani-

toba Blizzard entered the weekend 0-8-1 in their last nine games, and with their loss Friday are now winless in 10 straight games. Two of those losses were against the Winnipeg Monarchs, who are tied with the Blizzard with eight points each, though three of the Monarchs' four victories came at the expense of the Blizzard.

Of course, last year saw two West Division teams meet in the MJHL final. It's not how you start but how you finish that counts. So just because the East is dominating now doesn't mean they will be come March.

The Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries MHL Stars of the Week are headlined this week by 16-year-old Cohen Lewko from the Virden Oil Capitals. In a pair of games, Lewko scored four goals and added two assists in two games.

Next up is Landon Pue from the Selkirk Steelers. In three games, Pue scored four times and also added two assists for a six-point week.

The final winner is forward Adam Vigfusson from the league-leading Niverville Nighthawks. In two games, Vigfusson scored three times and added two helpers.

Just a few deals to report this week. The Waywayseecappo Wolverines have acquired forward Michael Donovan from the Flin Flon Bombers of the SJHL for a player development fee (PDF). The 18-year-old from Iqaluit had one assist in seven games with the Bombers.

As well, the Portage Terriers have acquired defenseman Ben Albers from Fort McMurray of the AJHL for a PDF. The American born blueliner had a goal and two helpers in eight games this year.

And finally the Northern Manitoba Blizzard have shipped defenseman Lane Apperley to the Swan Valley Stampers. The 19-year-old Altona product, who played in Niverville last season, had one assist in five games played with the Blizzard this season.

A pair of suspensions were recently handed out by the MJHL, each for removing equipment prior to a fight. The guilty parties are Parker Seymour from the Portage Terriers and Dawson Andries from the Neepawa Titans back on Nov. 19. I know Hockey Canada wants fighting out of hockey but it still sure gets fans out of their seats for good or ill.

The MJHL will be represented at this year's World Junior A Challenge, which takes place in Trois-Rivières, Que., Dec. 7-13.

Josh Gratton from the Winnipeg Blues was named to the Team West coaching staff as an assistant. Team West will be led by Trevor Blevins, the head coach of the SJHL's Melfort Mustangs.

There is another name that will be familiar to MJHL fans - Éric Labrosse. Labrosse is leading the AJHL's Lloydminster Bobcats this year after leading the Northern Manitoba Blizzard to a MJHL championship last year.

As for players, those should be announced soon.

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SPORTS

OIL CAPS ROOKIE DESCHAMPS IMPRESSES WITH HOCKEY IQ

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

While Jett Deschamps is a Montreal Canadiens fan, the Virden Oil Capitals rookie appreciates various facets of Cale Makar's game.

Last season, Makar, who plays for the Colorado Avalanche, won his second James Norris Memorial Trophy. That honour is given annually to the National Hockey League's top defenceman. Deschamps, a fellow blue-liner, said:

"I am a Habs fan, but have always looked up to Makar because of how he plays the game. He's such an amazing skater and he thinks the game so well, so I've always tried to mimic parts of his playing style because he is so entertaining to watch."

A 17-year-old from Headingley, Deschamps has proven to be a valuable contributor on the back end already for the Oil Capitals in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League. The 5-foot-11, 170-pounder has four assists through 17 games this season.

"Jett is a highly intelligent player," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "He has a great stick to defend and really good edges to allow him time and space to make plays. He makes a good first pass and has good offensive instincts. He has been a really good addition to our back end."

The Oil Capitals acquired Deschamps in a trade earlier this year. In 2024, the Steinbach Pistons selected him in the fourth round of the MJHL Draft. The year before, Deschamps was taken in the fifth round by the Regina Pats in the Western Hockey League Prospects Draft. He has attended various camps with the Pats.

"These camps have shown me what I need to do in order to play at that next level, and getting to play some preseason games over the last two years was a great experience," Des-

champs said. "Overall, these camps have helped me gain confidence and have taught me the things I need to do in order to play at that level."

Over the past few seasons, he has developed his game at the RINK Hockey Academy in Winnipeg. In 2024, Deschamps was named to the Canadian Sport School Hockey League U17 Tier II First All-Star Team. Last season, he recorded 30 points, including six goals, in 36 games at the U18 prep level. Now Deschamps is pleased to be in Virden.

"I have enjoyed lots about playing for the Oil Caps, since it is a smaller town where everything is so close, and I also found it super easy to make new relationships with people since everyone is so nice and welcoming," he said. "I also love the rink and all the great fans we have."

Off the ice, Deschamps has been helped in his adjustment by his billet parents, Nathan and Julie Holovach. He said, "They are super nice and easy to talk to and they also have twins."



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPS

Virden Oil Caps Jett Deschamps.

REF MEMORIES

REF TO
WRITER

GERRY
NOLAN



When out on the ice officiating a game, sometimes you hear some things said that are just downright funny. Such was the case in a game between the Elkhorn Canadians and a visiting team who shall remain nameless as well as the player's name to protect them from any embarrassment. This was during a South West Hockey League game. So, this is what occurred during a stoppage of play.

Dennis Kyle who was a great hockey player as well as a great ball player and an even better person, was the man who used this situation to an advantage for his team.

On this particular night, I am assessing a penalty for tripping. Let us refer to the other player involved as Jack Tripper. Sounds original, right? Elkhorn was leading the game by a score of 4-1 at the time the infraction was called. The infraction happened right in front of the penalty box. My arm goes up to call, I blow the whistle and give the signal for tripping. Jack Tripper just looks at me, says nothing because it is a no doubt penalty. Jack is about to enter the penalty box when out of nowhere comes Dennis Kyle skating quickly toward me, and he is in a hurry. Denny said to me Gerry, don't call that penalty. I said I have to call the penalty; it was an obvious tripping penalty. Denny says yes, I know but please just let it go this one time. I said no I have to call the penalty. At this point Jack Tripper and Denny Kyle and I are all around the referee crease which would make us about three feet apart from each other. Denny repeats himself about not calling the penalty and so I say to Denny, Why do you not want me to call the penalty. Jack Tripper is also all ears on this as well. Denny replies that their power play is not working very well tonight but when Jack Tripper is on the ice we have scored all 4 of our goals while he is on the ice! If he stays on we will probably score some more goals. When Denny repeated his statement he had a smirk on his face. Well Jack Tripper was very upset at Dennis. For the rest of the night, Jack was off his game completely and I believe he was actually on the ice for six of the Elkhorn goals that night. Whenever the opportunity arose, Jack was chasing Dennis down, but never did catch him. What a line by Dennis and quick thinking as well to come up with that one liner!

After the game is over and both clubs have shaken hands, both teams as well as the officials are having a beer after the game up at the Elkhorn hotel. To everyone's surprise, here is Jack Tripper and Denny Kyle sitting at the same table having a beer. I believe Denny bought it for Jack and they were having a laugh about the whole thing.

This said a lot to all of us, you compete hard against one another for sixty minutes and then the buzzer goes to end the game. Time to visit and enjoy the evening and each other's company. Is that not the way it is supposed to be after a senior hockey league game? Everyone has to work the next day, senior hockey is a working man's hockey league. What a memory! Thanks, Denny, for giving me some great memories of not only that night but by the way you played the game. I was fortunate to watch Dennis play many times and he never disappointed me. We miss you, Dennis! One of the great men, who left us way too early!

OIL KINGS WIN PAIR OF THHL WITH TIMELY GOALS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Oil Kings lit the lamp when it mattered most last week to secure a pair of Tiger Hills Hockey League victories.

The team beat the Carberry Plainsmen 6-4 on Friday night. On Sunday, the senior squad defeated the Melita Bisons 8-4. With the two wins, the Oil Kings improved their record to 5-3-0-0. As of Nov. 24, Rivers (7-0-0-0) led the THHL with 14 points. Next in the standings were Hartney (5-1-0-0), Killarney (5-0-0-0), Virden, and Minnedosa (5-0-0-0) all with 10 points.

The Oil Kings are in Deloraine to take on the Royals on Nov. 28. The squad does not play at home until Dec. 10, when it faces the Rivers Comets.

Oil Kings 6, Plainsmen 4

On the road on Nov. 21, the Oil Kings grabbed a 3-0 lead by scoring three goals between 12:05 and 14:26 of the first period. Brad Bowles lit the lamp for the opening marker. Dylan Halliday then found the back of the net twice. At the 15:53 mark of the first frame, Carberry's Jaden Johnson scored to make the score 3-1 in favour of Virden. The Oil Kings increased their lead to three, 4-1, with a second-period goal by Tanner Koroscil.

In the third period, the Plainsmen scored three straight goals to tie things up at 4-4. Kean McLaren and Tavish Quinn scored at even strength before Kaelan Waldner knotted the contest with the man advantage just over halfway through the last period.

"They got a quick one and then capitalized on their power play," Virden's Shane Keown said. "We knew we had another gear and we all needed to find it."

At 14:04, Keown scored the game-winning goal. He said,

"Wally (Nolan Wallace) shot one from the point on net and I saw the rebound and fought for the puck against a couple Plainsmen. As I fell, I swept the puck into the net. Luckily enough, they don't ask how, they ask how many."

With 12 seconds remaining, Koroscil added an empty-net goal to make the final score, 6-4. Halliday led Virden with three points. Bowles, Koroscil, Wallace, and Jaden Browning-Lozinski each had two. Oil Kings goalie Eric Reid earned the win with 22 saves. Joel Baron stopped 49 shots for Carberry.

Oil Kings 8, Bisons 4

On Nov. 23, the Oil Kings and Bisons were all knotted up at 4-4 after two periods of play. The Oil Kings offence kicked into high gear and exploded for four third-period goals.

Defenceman Dillin Stonehouse scored the game winner 3:18 into the period. Keown, Koroscil, and Bowles all found the back of the net for Virden in the third.

The contest's first frame featured some back and forth scoring. Melita got the last goal and held a 3-2 lead at the first intermission. Elisha Bambridge scored both of Virden's goals. Two of Melita's markers came on the power play. Ryan Crepeele, Will Brown, and Nial Mills had Melita's goals.

In the second period, Koroscil and Bowles scored to give Virden a 4-3 lead. In the final four minutes of the period, a goal by Brown knotted the game at 4-4.

For Virden, goalie Riley Wallace made 18 saves, had one goal against, and earned the win. Duncan Paddock also played for Virden. He had three goals against and made nine saves. Dez Ramsey stopped 36 shots for Melita.

Bowles finished with five points. Koroscil had four points and Bambridge three.

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All aboard for the Christmas Rural Road Trip

By VEA Staff
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Join us on a bus tour as we guide you on a

Christmas Rural Road Trip to the most enchanting shops on Sunday, Nov. 30.

Virden: Meet our bus and tour guide outside Flower Attic & Gifts on Seventh Ave. at 9am. Take time to shop inside Flower Attic & Gifts, then head over to MJ's Coffee Bar & Bistro to grab your coffee (included) for the road trip.

The bus will head next to Samantha's Boutique in Elkhorn for an hour stop where there's discounts, treats and giveaways.

The bus then heads north to Rossburn, to Gone Scrappin' In Bloom where a charcuterie lunch & coffee (included) are served. The two hour stop will provide time for shopping there.

The final destination is an hour's stop at Campbell's Flowers & Gifts in Hamiota.

After a fun filled day, it's time to head back home to Virden, arrival time approximately 5:30pm

Hamiota: Start at Campbell's Flowers & Gifts in Hamiota at 9am where there's time to shop.

Then it's off to Rossburn's Gone Scrappin' In Bloom, a charcuterie lunch & coffee (included) and shopping time.

Next, Samantha's Boutique in Elkhorn for about 45 min - 1 hour.

And the final destination is Virden's Flower Attic & Gifts. Before the return trip to Hamiota, the tour will head to MJ's Coffee Bar & Bistro to grab coffee (included) for the road home to arrival at approximately 5:30pm in Hamiota.

Shops on tour:

Flower Attic & Gifts in downtown Virden features a flower shop with jewelry, ladies' apparel, home decor, giftware and more.

Campbell's Flowers & Gifts operating since 1970 provides flower arrangements, plants, and seasonal giftware for all occasions. "Christmas is special for us as we turn the adjoined chapel into a Christmas Wonderland."

Gone Scrappin' In Bloom is in a 1939 heritage general store, a warm inviting atmosphere. Find an eclectic variety of items - flowers/plants, gifts, gourmet groceries, craft supplies and furniture paint, kids toys and books, local themed clothing, plus a specialty cafe and so much more. The store becomes a magical festive emporium of Christmas trees, lights, and glitter. A Hallmark Christmas Movie version of a store in rural Rossburn with locally made products and others curated from small businesses world-wide.

Samantha's Boutique in Elkhorn, is truly a one stop shop offering ladies fashion, giftware, gourmet food, a full service floral shop and more. "We have something for everyone." www.samanthasboutique.ca

Tender

Announcement

PASTURELAND FOR NEAR TWO CREEKS IN THE RM OF WALLACE WOODWORTH SALE BY TENDER

The Leslie Family is tendering one quarter of pastureland near Two Creeks in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth in Manitoba. Land has potential to be converted to grain land. No mineral rights are included in the sale.

LAND DESCRIPTION:

NW ¼ 25-12-27 WPM

A package of information is available from the law office by email request to anique@mhmlaw.ca. Persons tendering are advised to conduct their own due diligence and verify all information and title status.

Tenders are to be submitted in a sealed envelope to the law office of McNeill Harsymchuk McConnell, Box 520, 243 Raglan Street W., Virden, Manitoba, R0M 2C0, Attn: Anique Timmerman; accompanied by a cheque for 5% of tender payable in trust to the law firm to form the deposit on any successful tenders. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted. Cheques for unsuccessful tenders will be returned. Please include name, mailing address and phone number. The successful bidder(s) will be required to complete an agreement covering terms and conditions of sale. Please note "Leslie Tender" on envelope.

More information may be obtained by contacting Chad Leslie at (204)851-5775.

Tenders close **December 19, 2025, at 12:00 noon.**

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE:

1. Closing to be on or before January 30, 2026.
2. In addition to the deposit, the balance of the accepted tender must be paid on or before closing. If the balance is not paid by closing or on terms acceptable to the Vendor, the deposit may be forfeited as liquidated damages and not as a penalty.
3. Purchasers will be responsible for municipal taxes after January 1, 2026.
4. Purchaser shall be responsible for payment of GST or shall self-assess for GST.



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Jeremy Bray's appeal has been answered-for now

By Ken Waddell
RIVERS BANNER

This past week, a Rivers young man's health has been in the news again. Jeremy Bray's health has been reported previously in the Rivers Banner and in many other media outlets. Mr. Bray was informed recently that he would not be able to get the drug Risdiplam, sold under the brand name Evrysdi by Roche, the drug's manufacturer. Manitoba Health minister Uzoma Asagwara had convinced the company to provide it for free but the company recently said they couldn't supply it on that basis any longer. When Bray brought his case to the attention of the health

minister, Bray was terribly disappointed with the minister turning down his request. On Tuesday, Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew says the province is reversing its decision and will ensure a 30-year-old battling a degenerative disease will keep receiving his life-sustaining treatment for at least another year. Kinew said Tuesday he was "very moved" by news reports overnight about Jeremy Bray's disappointment after realizing his pleas for continued coverage hadn't changed the health minister's mind. On Tuesday, CBC Manitoba reported, "We have some positive news to share with you and your family here today," Kinew told question

period on Tuesday afternoon, speaking directly to Bray. "I'm happy to share with the House and all Manitobans that you are going to get this coverage, probably for another year, as we push to make sure the federal regulator does its job to gather the evidence." Kinew said his government has been in touch with Roche and "some progress" has been made in the negotiations with the manufacturer. The premier didn't immediately specify who would fund the interim treatment or whether that had been decided. Public pressure has been brought to bear on this matter by numerous MPs and MLAs.



Jeremy, his laptop ready for the work day.

FILE PHOTO

CPR boomtown Oak Lake shines in new history release


Submitted by Ed Whitcomb
BY OAK LAKE NEWS

I'm probably your most prolific historian because I've just published my 15th history book. Its: *Acquiring the Canadian West: Why? How? And How Much?*, the story of how the young Dominion bought Rupert's Land (which didn't own it), provoked the Red River Resistance and the premature creation of Manitoba, tricked BC into joining, signed and then violated treaties with the First Nations (not including Sioux Valley who were regarded as refugees), built the longest railway in the world (over the wrong pass in the Rockies), and settled the prairies. The chapter on settlement explains how the survey system worked in and around Oak Lake. It was an incredible achievement, but for a number of reasons, most immigrants went to other countries and the prairies stagnated for the first three decades of Confederation. Oak Lake is mentioned many times. In 1882, it was the base camp for the CPR's historic thrust across the prairies, with a population of 5,000. In the preface I explain growing up in a CPR town in the 1950s because I watched the crews maintain the tracks, knew how elevators worked, watched engines fill up with water and dump ash, met the local at 5:15 and saw the teamster deliver parcels to the stores on Main Street (including dad's drug store) and the postmaster take a wheelbarrow of mail to the Post Office. I did most of the jobs on various farms (milking cows by hand) and have been over most of the railway routes in Canada. I wrote my first history essay in Grade 8, 1956, arguing that Louis Riel should be regarded as a Father of Confederation, and this book contains more information on him plus his picture on the front cover, beside Sir John A. Macdonald. There are lots of maps and pictures and the graph of a


township explains how it was surveyed and settled. Nine professional historians helped prepare the book. For more information, contact me at 613-833-2414 or books@from-sea-to-sea.com Writing it brought back many memories. **About:** Ed Whitcomb was raised in Oak Lake. By age 14 he had written his first history essay, won his first history prize, and adopted music, coin collecting, and traveling as hobbies. He received a BA from the University of Manitoba in 1964, capturing the University silver medals in History and Economics, the Brandon College Faculty Prize and the Honour Society Award. In 1966 he completed an MA at the University of Manitoba in Canadian and European History. He received a Ph.D. from the University of London, England in 1970, published by Duke University Press under the title *Napoleon's Diplomatic Service*. After teaching History at universities in Nova Scotia, Quebec and Manitoba, he joined the Canadian Foreign Service. He served in Yugoslavia, Thailand, Indonesia and India, and spent 15 years as an international political and strategic analyst in the Privy Council Office. He retired in 2009 to work full time on promoting Canadian history and music. Whitcomb has published dozens of books, articles and letters including histories of all 10 provinces. He's compiled a book of 50 songs that mention

Acquiring the Canadian West:


Why? How? and How Much?



The Last Spike, Craigellachie, BC



Louis Riel



Sir John A. Macdonald

Dr. Ed Whitcomb

Canadian people, places, culture and history for *The Great Canadian Songbook, Volume I*, published in December, 2006. Since the 1950s Ed has played with numerous musical groups in Manitoba and Ontario and on his foreign postings. In 2014, Ed was inducted into the Brandon University Wall of Fame.

VCI girls win Provincial AAA



PHOTO BY VIRDEN COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

The Virden Collegiate Institute girls volleyball team captured the Provincial AAA JV Volleyball Championship. Coached by Curtis Plett, the talented squad went undefeated at the Nov. 20-22 tournament in Swan River. In a hard-fought championship match, VCI prevailed over Winnipeg's Linden Christian School, 25-11, 25-27, and 17-15. VCI's Kasidy Hoemsen was named the tournament MVP. Fellow Golden Bears Abby Murray and Michelle Watters earned spots on the All-Star Team. More details to come in an upcoming edition of the Empire-Advance.

Meeting to discuss
Two Creeks District & Ross School

CAIRN DESIGN

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December 4, 2025 @ 7 p.m.
Virden Legion Club Room

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2:00 - 4:30 PM
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