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No newspapers on Dec 26 or Jan 2.

Empire-Advance

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Quilt show coming up in January at the Station

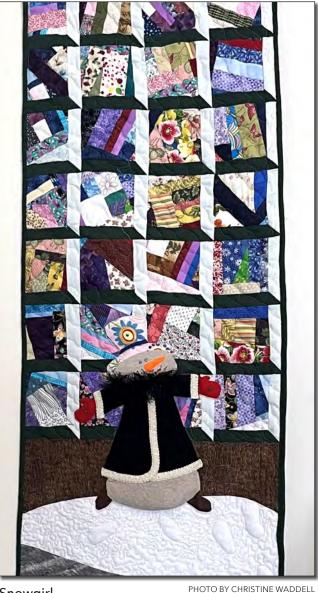
By Anne Davison **EMPIRE-ADVANCE**

Here's something to look forward to in the New Year.

Quilters and would-be quilters, in fact, anyone who appreciates colourful design, will enjoy the upcomingArtsMosaicExhibition in the Station on Sixth Ave. Running from January 2 – 31, Christine Waddell's quilt exhibition - "The Journey's Never Done" will be on show.

Christine is an avid quilter. She even has a sewing room in the lower level of the Neepawa Banner and Press. Unique quilted art pieces also adorn the Waddell's Empire-Advance office.

Waddell's opening reception will be Thursday, Jan. 8 at 1:00pm-2:30pm. Arts Mosaic manager, Alix Portrebka says, "Christine will be doing a technique demonstration (known as a bed turning) at the reception. This will include quilts otherwise not featured in the exhibition. We hope quilting lovers and novices alike will stop by for the afternoon."



Snowgirl



New to You



The Association for Community Living (ACL) thrift store, New to You with manager Joy Wolters minding the shop. The thrift store entrance can be found around the corner from Seventh Ave. at Unit #3, 585, 7th Ave. South. It's clean and bright and with a five-year lease, this is their new home.





Openn Christmo

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Thank you to all our patrons and the public for supporting our library this

past year.







- Dallas & Kerri Couiter











The Virden Oilmen donation | S.A.I.L Christmas Sing Along



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Scott Wilson presents a cheque for \$4000 from the Virden Oilmen's Golf Tournament to members of 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-R): Thelma Quinn (Auxiliary President), Carol Anne Trowell (Secretary), and Gwen Clarke (Treasurer).



HOTO BY KRISTA PEDERSON

On December 16, S.A.I.L had a Christmas sing along. The musicians were The Senior Serenaders, and treats were provided by the Virden and Area Hospital Auxiliary. The pianist was Sandra Unger for this part of the afternoon. Several played during the hour long sing-along.

Canupawakpa wrestles with out-of-control dogs

Chief Brown stymied by discord

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Controlling dogs in Canupawakpa Dakota First Nation has become a matter of public safety and responsible pet ownership, and yet Chief Brown said he's not finding consensus within his community, nor full support from the elected council.

When two children in Canupawakpa Dakota First Nation were attacked by a dog, their aunt felt she needed to do something. Tybie Brittany Brown reached out to several media outlets including the Empire-Advance. Her Letter: 'Dangerous dog on the loose' was published on page 8, Nov. 21st.

In this letter Tybie Brown said two children, 7 and 8 were attacked. One child got away, the other child was bitten and taken to hospital for treatment.

She has since provided further details:

"The attack happened on Sunday, Nov. 16, 2025 at approximately 4:30pm. My nephew is traumatized and is showing fear towards large dogs. He was bitten on the elbow, he has two large puncture wounds on the top

of his elbow and below his elbow, there is some bruising and he's been extremely sore."

The Empire-Advance reached out to MFNPS (First Nations police) who attended the incident and they recently responded with this report:

"On November 16, 2025, MFNPS officers responded to a report of a youth who had been bitten by a dog. The youth had received medical treatment for the injury. Upon further investigation, the situation escalated when the youth's parents allegedly threatened the dog's owner following the initial incident involving the bite incident.

"The dog was quarantined for 10 days following the incident. Charges were laid in connection with the threats against the dog's owners. This matter is before the

"The MFNPS becomes involved in incidents involving animals when public safety is a concern. More often than not, animal control and behaviours fall under local bylaws."

The dog was released back to its owners.

Chief Raymond Brown, in an interview, said there is no existing policy

regarding the care and control of dogs within Canupawakpa community. He confirmed that a child was recently bitten and says the incident is part of a much larger and ongoing problem with uncontrolled dogs on the reserve.

"It is a big controversy, you know. Some of the dog owners are saying, well, my dog is a member of the family."

Some argue that their dog is protecting their property and put the blame on others.

Chief Brown sounded frustrated, "Butwhat they don't understand is that they're not looking after, the dogs are not tied up at home. Their dogs are not on their leash. Their dogs are just running wild."

He continued, "And, you know... That's not the first incident I'll tell you." He thinks there could be 20 dogs running around

the reserve. Nurses working there have been bitten and had to have a course of 'shots.'

"There was one day where a dog was dragging a little girl towards the field, but then she kind of fought the dog off by using her boots to... hit the dog with her boots. Good thing that she was wearing a coat, that the dog snatched onto the coat arm."

Beyond the clear danger of dogs chasing kids as they run for the school bus, and attacking people, he went on to tell of dogs ripping up his garbage. "Just the other day, a pack of dogs when I wasn'thome, ravaged my garbage bin."

The chief says, "I'm in a position where I'm damned if I doit, damned if I don't.... I can order, let's get rid of these dogs. Then you have an uprising of community members." He'd like more support from council too.

The reserve has had

help through a spay and neuter program, "a bandaid solution" he calls it.

"I just think the owners need to take responsibility of their own animals." But for that, he says a by-law is needed and described an incident early on when, as a Brandon resident, he was threatened with a bill if the city had to cut his lawn.

"One day a member of the city council showed up, and a bylaw officer showed up and said, 'Hey, you got two days to cut your lawn.' I went and got a lawn mower, and then, me and my sons... we cleaned it up...."

As it is, the recent dog attack has resulted in a clash between two families and trauma to a child.

The chief says he's researching animal-control laws and plans to call a community-wide meeting soon, stressing the need for collective responsibility before a tragedy occurs.

A provincial spokes-

person said the province is working to strengthen community capacity for companion-animal care through the One Health Program. The plan is to improve access to culturally informed veterinary services, such as spay/ neuter, wellness clinics, and education in remote and Indigenous communities. This would include engagement with community councils on their planning.



Health restrictions/guidelines;

renters and attendees must comply with up-to-date Manitoba Public Health Orders.





By Chad Carpenter









Christmas is a time to take action

n a world that seems to be filled with trouble, poverty and war, ▲I think it's important to do all we can to change what we can. The Serenity Prayer pretty much sums it up. The Serenity prayer says, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, And wisdom to know the difference."

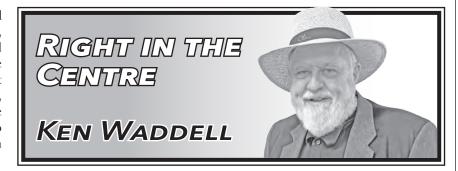
I grieve for all the people who are so badly affected by war and poverty. I pray and hope and wish for an end to war and hatred and violence. In addition to the prayers, hopes and wishes, we can do all within our power and circle of influence to make as many positive changes as we can control.

Go back a few lines and re-read the Serenity Prayer above and let those words wash over you. Most of us will not be called upon to end war and poverty in far-away lands but we are being called upon every day to have the "Courage to change the things I can".

Here's some suggestions to ponder. Go to church, a mosque, a temple or synagogue. Don't get hung up on what the name on the building is, get hung up on what they teach and believe.

Maybe you haven't ever been to a church, or it's been a long time or your parents or grandparents used to go to church. Check out the churches in your area. No, they aren't perfect. Or if they are, they won't be after you start attending. (Don't take offence at that, it's a joke).

Here's another joke for you. If you won't go to a church because of all the hypocrites that attend there, make sure you aren't putting a hypocrite means they are closer to God than split you on your way out the door.



I think we all admire our ancestors to some extent. Every people group known to Canada has a background of establishing a place of worship. First Nations, Red River Metis, every settler group that has come to Western Canada (and that includes First Nations albeit they arrived a lot earlier than others) all set up a system and place of worship.

We all should be participating in and supporting what we believe in.

Here is another idea. As a society, we have taken a number of things out of our daily experience. Our public schools have taken away Bible readings and repeating the Lord's prayer. I can somewhat understand that we have many different beliefs but why can't we sing O'Canada and God save the King? Sporting events do better than many other venues with anthems than the schools do. If people can't sing O'Canada or God save the King, maybe they shouldn't be in Canada. I get it. Canada has lots of faults and so does King Charles, I know that. But, Canada has done fairly well by us all and as much as we complain about Canada, our King and the British system of parliament, is there some other place you would rather live? To that I say, don't let the

And a bit more on churches if you will indulge me. Over the centuries, in spite of the problems churches have caused, we would not have as many hospitals as we have without the churches. Many hospitals were started by our churches. We would not have as many Universities either. Brandon University, University of Winnipeg, Canadian Mennonite University, Providence College, St. John's College, St. Paul's College are all church based and founded institutions. And I may have missed a few.

I firmly believe it is incumbent on us all to do more for God and Country. If you believe, as I do, that Canada is slipping as a country, then I implore you to reflect at this time as to what more you can do.

At this Christmas Season we must remain thankful to God for his provision and mercy. Christmas is a great time to think upon God and his Son Jesus.

We are born, we live and then we die. God is good through it all and it is incumbent upon us all to live in His blessing and pass it along whenever and wherever we can.

May God bless you and yours this season and in the year ahead!

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this column are the writer's personal views and between you and God because that door hit you where the Good Lord are not to be taken as being the view of the newspaper staff.



Traditions!

apa in Fiddler on the Roof, belts out 'Tradition' and then with dialogue and song explores some of the common practices of his village. The roles were clearly defined, the requirements for eating, dressing, sleeping and working all stemmed from traditions. He asks 'how did it get started?' and with a shrug and a chuckle admits 'I don't know!' . That can be said for many, if not most, of the traditions we carry forth.

The Christmas tree should not be set up or decorated until the Saturday evening before the First Sunday of Advent, a law according to Ed. I understood that a bit when we cut and hauled in a live tree. But then, the tree was required to stay until at least the sixth of January. With falling needles it made more sense to get it up earlier and take it down right after New Year's - at the latest! Tradition won, until the decision of when to put up the tree rested solely on my shoulders. And this year, I have chosen not to put a tree up at all.

Scratch tradition! A custom that developed under my reign was blue lights, on the tree and around the home. Blue, for me, is a peaceful, tranquil colour, calling me home. I have put that custom away as well. The blue LED lights on a tree bother my head, just like fluorescent lights do.

There are no lights on the outside of my home either. After downsizing and estate tidying I don't want one more thing for anyone to look after. My grandson assures that putting up the lights- and they would have to be in a perfectly straight line- is not a problem, and then taking them down, whenever- would also not be a problem. I am now challenged to think through why I don't want them or come up with better excuses/

Christmas Baking! Now there's a tradition I can embrace. I have made the fruit cake, it has ripened, I have sampled, and all is well. I made a family favourite, date filled oatmeal cookies, the kind you roll out and sandwich when cool. I was thrilled to have my great grand think they were good enough to have a second (I don't make them huge) and I smile to think that this tradition may go another generation. I used to make many sugar cookies, in many shapes and with attention to decorating. I've not been moved that far...yet.

And then there is the music. One must have carols playing softly in the background. Not so much anymore. Music was a major (get the pun?) part of our family life. There were concerts to practice for and preparations for programs at care homes, there was singing for pleasure. Several times I have selected holiday music and too quickly become distracted. So, I don't need background noise. I will enjoy every concert and service I attend.

Start a new tradition, enjoy an old one. And when asked 'how did it get started?' it's okay to reply 'I don't know'. Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas.

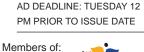


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Town Office: 204-748-2440

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

This Season, Give the Gift of a CEP Station EPrint

Looking for a gift for that person that has everything?! We've got you covered!

This year, give the gift of a Virden CP Station print by renowned Canadian artist William Hobbs. While quantities last, unframed prints are available for only \$30 each.

Every print sold helps fuel fundraising efforts for restoration of the Caboose at the **Historic CP Station.**

Want to support the project even more? Donations are welcome, and tax receipts are available.

Don't miss your chance to own a piece of Virden's history – before these prints leave the station for good.

Employment Opportunity Detention Guard - RCMP Detachment

The Virden RCMP Detachment is hiring for the position of **Detention Guard**.

The responsibilities of this role include (but are not limited to):

- · Observe and check prisoners throughout shift, including in-person and CCTV checks
- Record daily activities, and maintain logbooks
- Maintain security within the cellblock by ensuring cell doors are locked
- · Handle and dispense laundry items, maintaining cleanliness and tidiness of cells when vacated, arranging janitor assistance as required.
- Perform other duties particular to the Detachment as laid out in the Unit Supplemental Orders.

Applications can be dropped off at the Virden RCMP detachment.

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

Holiday Hours

Town Office	
December 24	8:30 AM - 12:00 PM
December 25 & 26	
December 31	8:30 AM - 3:00 PM
January 1 & 2	Closed

Tundra Oil and Gas Place

December 24	8:30 AM - 12:00 PM
December 25	Closed
December 26	11:00-1:00 for Boxing Day Skate
December 31	CLOSED at 3:00 PM
January 1	Closed

Virden Landfill

December 25 & 26	Closed
December 31	10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
January 1	

2026 Garbage and Recycle Schedules

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

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

Employment Opportunity Recreation Technician

The Town of Virden has an opening for a full-time Recreation Technician, commencing immediately.

This is a position in the Parks & Recreation Department, although the individual could be required to assist in other departments, if necessary. Working in Tundra Oil & Gas Place forms a portion of the duties, which will also include working in the parks, recreation grounds, the pool and other Town-owned facilities.

For more information about this opportunity – please visit www.virden.ca/p/employment-opportunities

Next Council Meeting

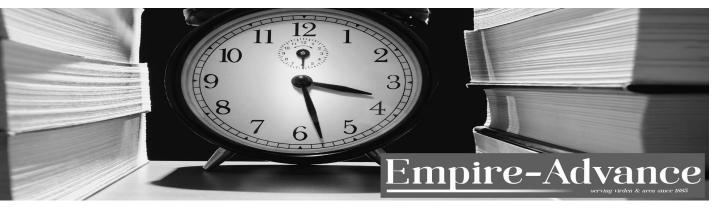
January 6 & 20 Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

info@virden.ca 🏶 www.virden.ca 😝 Town of Virden 🔘 @virdentown

Be On Time!

Advertising deadline:

12 Noon on Tuesday



HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

With the holidays soon upon us, the kids will be at home for two weeks. Get those little hands busy in the kitchen to help make these recipes for the special people (and dogs) in your lives.

Many writers and poets have referred to the New Year as a chance to begin anew, to hope for a brighter future, and indefinite possibilities. I want to extend my warmest wishes to you and your loved ones. May this year be blessed with love, laughter, peace and good health.

Cheeseburger soup

This cheeseburger soup takes everything you love about cheese burgers and transforms it into a cheesy and creamy soup. Your whole family will love it.

1 lb. hamburger

1 medium onion, chopped

2 celery stalks, sliced

4 medium sized potatoes, cubed

1/2 tsp. pepper

2 tsp. dried parsley flakes

1/4 cup flour

2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Garnish:

2 green onions, thinly sliced

dill pickles, diced

4 cups beef broth

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

2 medium carrots, sliced

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. prepared mustard

1/4 cup butter

2 cups milk, preferably whole milk

bacon bits

Cook hamburger stirring frequently, until the meat is brown and crumbly, 5 to 7 minutes. Drain of any excess fat and put into a large pot. Add the beef broth, onion, garlic and celery and cook for five minutes. Add the carrots, potatoes, salt, pepper, mustard and parsley flakes to the pot and bring to a boil. Turn the heat down and simmer until the potatoes start to become tender, 10 to 12 minutes. Meanwhile in a small frying pan add the butter and the flour. Cook for 3 to 5 minutes until bubbly. Slowly add the milk to the flour stirring all the time. When this thickens slowly add to the pot of soup stirring all the while. Simmer for a few minutes more. Remove from the heat, add the grated cheese, stir gently and serve. Garnish with desired toppings.

Candy cane cheese cake

1 1/2 cup chocolate cookie or chocolate chip cookie crumbs

1/4 cup sugar

1/4 cup melted butter

Topping:

1 package cream cheese, room temperature

1 can sweetened condensed milk

1/2 cup crushed peppermint candy canes

1/2 tsp. peppermint extract

1 -1 litre Cool Whip, thawed

Combine the base ingredients. Reserve 1/4 cup for topping and press remaining crumbs into a 9X9" pan. Put in the freezer while you make the topping. Mix the cream cheese together with the sweetened condensed milk. Reserve 1 tablespoon of the crushed candy for the garnish. Add the remaining candy and the peppermint extract to the cream cheese. Fold in the Cool Whip. Spread over base. Garnish with remaining candy and crumbs. Cover with plastic wrap and freeze until ready to use. Do not thaw before serving



Tips to make the most of **Boxing Day**

Submitted

By Metro Creative

Boxing Day is a beloved tradition in many households throughout Canada and the United Kingdom. For those fortunate enough to enjoy a day off on December 26, there's no wrong or right way to spend Boxing Day. However, those looking to make the most of the day can consider the following

Identify how you prefer to spend the day. There's no shortage of things to do on Boxing Day, but individuals need not feel beholden to spend the day in any particular way. Many people look forward to taking advantage of the many retail sales available on Boxing Day, while others take to the great outdoors to get a little fresh air and exercise after a fun and food-centric Christmas Day. Identify how you prefer to spend the day, even if it's relaxing at home after a busy Christmas Day, and then enjoy your decision.

Do your homework if you plan to go shopping. Come Boxing Day, great deals can be had on everything from electronics to clothing to home furnishings. Those who plan to spend the day shopping can plan ahead and identify items they need and want. Retailers may have limited inventories for Boxing Day sales after the busy holiday shopping season, so knowing what you want in

advance and where to get it can increase the chances you will secure the items you've earmarked.

Get together with old friends. The holiday season is a family-centric time of year when many people travel back to their hometowns to see their parents and other relatives. Family gatherings tend to take place on Christmas Day, so Boxing Day presents a great opportunity to see old friends from your hometown. Whether you or your friends still reside in your hometown or your group includes a mix of those who stayed close to home and others who now live elsewhere, chances are many people are back in town on Boxing Day. That makes the day a great time for a reunion. Organize a Boxing Day brunch at a local restaurant, resolve to go shopping together or arrange a friendly pickup game at a local park. Each of these activities marks a great way to catch up with old friends.

Take in some local entertainment. If you want to get out but do not necessarily feel like shopping, investigate local entertainment options on Boxing Day. A local sporting event, a concert or a local theater performance all offer an opportunity to get out of the house on Boxing Day.

Boxing Day can be spent however celebrants see fit. Identifying how you want to spend the day in advance can ensure it's enjoyable and fruitful.







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Council reports on policing, fire protection, medical service

RM of Wallace-Woodworth Dec. 9 council meeting

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Westman RCMP Sgt. Amy Doan attended the council meeting and introduced Cpl. Carrie LeComte who oversees the rural municipalities in the detachment area. Cpl. LeComte will regularly attend council meetings and serve as a primary point of contact

Sgt. Doan reported that Westman detachment continues to face staff vacancies with a member still suspended, one on parental leave, another member is gradually returning to full-time and one officer is restricted to administrative duties. Sgt. Doan continues to fill in for S.Sgt. Cooper who is seconded elsewhere.

Despite shortages Sgt. Doan stated that service delivery has not been compromised. The detachment has not missed any calls, attendance at incidents has remained stable, and police presence on the roads continues unchanged.

RCMP members attended community meetings and participated in Remembrance Day ceremonies as part of their community engagement.

Reeve Clayton Canart asked how long the RCMP intends to leave the detachment without a permanent staff ser-

geant, noting that the community seems to have operated in a state of uncertainty for years.

Sgt. Doan replied, "I came here to do my substantive position, but I'm happy to fill the void until that gets sorted out later. I do believe that that's going to be sorted in the next couple of months. They're running job actions for the position that Staff Sergeant Cooper is helping out in and when that position is filled, that should bring him back... I'm hoping by April we have a clearer picture."

Coun. Barb Stambuski asked who manages highway signboards during storm-related closures. Sgt. Doan said, "The Department of Highways-MTIholds responsibility for opening and closing gates and updating electronic signage. The superintendent in charge of highways consults with MTI, and that's who closes the gates, opens the gates, and should be maintaining the signboards." The message from the RCMP is that individuals drive at their own risk during closures, and the RCMP may take longer to reach an incident when conditions are hazardous.

Fire Station

the detachment without Coun. Diana Maca permanent staff ser- Donald reported that

Station 2 (Elkhorn) responded to 18 calls, including two structure fires. The new truck has arrived and is operational. A \$500 donation was received from the Ladies Auxiliary. Training schedules are set through February, and the station has distributed smoke detectors, with two additional households requesting assistance. Equipment repairs required include a rear water gauge, a new tank lid, new hardsuction hoses, and a sixinch main intake cap.

Station 1 (Virden) has responded to 92 calls including five structure fires, six supportvehicle responses, 10 wildland calls, 11 vehicle fires, 19 alarms and one controlled burn event. The station acquired a new gas monitor and a rescue life jacket. Current membership totals 25 (including one lifetime member and one recruit). Training continues on Thursday evenings. The Level 1 training course has been postponed until 2026 due to course changes, with February-March 2026 as a tentative window. Two sets of smoke detectors have been distributed.

Doctor recruitment retention

Coun. MacDonald reported that the area currently has six doctors but ideally requires

nine, particularly as the community is increasingly operating as a regional hub and receiving many ER patients from near Brandon. ER visits exceed 1,000 per month. Ambulance usage averages 2.4 transports per day.

Dr. Hammell raised the possibility of acquiring a CT scanner for Virden Hospital. An existing room with lead lining (the former operating room) could potentially accommodate the equipment. Hammell also expressed interest in a future stand-alone clinic rather than one attached to the hospital, as a growing hub would require expanded services—such as social work and respiratory supports—that are better suited to a dedicated building.

Recognition of service

Dr. Fitzgerald and Dr. Rue received formal recognition for long-term service at the hospital.

Former Wallace-Woodworth CAO Garth Mitchell was recognized at the Manitoba Legislature, where MLA Greg Nesbitt delivered a statement celebrating Mitchell's 45 years of public service and his role as CAO.

Deep Sky

Reeve Canart and Coun. Lyle Kinnaird attended the Deep Sky public meeting in Pipestone. Canart reported that two third-party presenters, one with a geology background and one a university professor from Alberta with more than twenty years of carbon-capture experience, delivered a presentation outlining

decades of research, referencing projects such as Boundary Dam and the Weyburn-Midale carbon dioxide project. Canart commented on questions from the audience saying, "There were certainly people there who had a preconceived decision of what their thoughts were, and I don't know that they would have been open to some of his statements, but he had a lot of information... [and] was very confident in his presentation." He said a few questions became pointed, though the overall session was

Cemetery Rd Bridge open

Council approved progress payment three of \$488,130 for the design and replacement of the Cemetery Road bridge which will open



NOTICE

Please send all advertisments, Letters to the Editor, article submissions, news items, etc., to our main email address virdenempireadvance@outlook.com.

Thank you!

Police Report

Westman RCMP Service Report for Dec. 7 to 13

Submitted

By Westman RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 60 calls for service. Some of these calls for service include 18 traffic offences, 6 Mischief, 7 Wellbeing Checks, 5 Mental Health Related, 1 Suspicious Persons, 1 False Alarms, 2 911 Acts, 3 Intoxicated Persons, 2 Assaults and 1 Impaired Operation while Impaired files.

On Dec. 8, and 9th during routine traffic patrols within the RM of Pipestone, RM of Wallace-Woodworth, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 118km/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 \$416. RCMP also observed a second vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 124km/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 \$364.

On Dec. 9, RCMP responded to a report of an Assault with Weapon in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth. Members attended and located a victim with physical injury to their head. Members obtained statement and learnt the victim was hit with a metal pipe to the head. Victim was transported to the hospital for medical treatment. Members attended a separate address and located the accused who was arrested and charged for Assault with Weapon, Assault Causing Bodily Harm, fail to comply with Probation and Fail to comply with Release Order x2. The accused was remanded into custody and is scheduled to appear in court.

On Dec. 11, 2025, RCMP responded to a report of a Domestic Assault in Progress in the RM of Two Borders. Members attended and located a male and a female who both denied the allegations. Members investigated further and collected evidence, and both were charged for Assault and were released on an Undertaking to appear in court in February

2026. On Dec. 13, RCMP responded to a report of a Suspicious activity in the Town of Virden. Members attended and located a vehicle stuck in the snow. Upon arrival, RCMP completed a sobriety check with a 20-yearold female. Driver showed signs of impairment and blew WARN on two separate samples. The driver was issued a three-day license suspension, and the vehicle was towed by Virden Towing.

On Dec. 13, during routine traffic patrols within the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 144km/ hr in a 100km/hr zone. RCMP initiated a stop, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$626.

To report a complaint or non-emergent incident to RCMP please call 204-748-2135. Forgeneral 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.

Manitoba Hydro releases 10-year roadmap to bolster production

By Anne Davison

EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Over the years, as Manitoba Hydro harnessed abundant rivers in Northern Manitoba, the province's supply of electricity seemed endless. And while it is a renewable resource, waterpower, Manitoba's competitive advantage, is subject to weather and growing demands.

Electric vehicles and other net zero initiatives feed on electrical power. Population growth and the continued surge of AI, cloud storage and data centres as well as industry growth all demand more from Manitoba's electrical grid.

Recent droughts impacted river flows, energy production and the Crown corporation's bottom line. The 2024-25 annual report that came out last March showed a consolidated net loss of \$63 million and the year before the utility's net loss was \$157 million.

Last spring President & CEO Allan Danroth said, "This is the second low water year in a row and the third Manitoba Hydro has experienced in four years."

This winter the utility has come out with a new 10-year Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) roadmap. The emphasis will be on efficiency, demand response, new wind energy, battery storage, and natural gas combustion turbines to meet a growing demand.

Road Map details six options

The road map was prepared by a team of more than 130 internal and external experts and incorporates input and feedback gathered during engagement with thousands of Manitobans in accordance with industry standards.

"This recommended development plan reflects the best available information and analysis of how Manitoba Hydro can meet growing energy demand while managing risk and continuing to provide Energy for Life,' said Danroth.

Manitoba Hydro has detailed six resource options available for development plans to 2035.

Energy efficiency means using less energy to lower consumption and delay the need for new resources. Efficiency is especially important during winter months when demand for electricity is at its highest.

Beyond the base Efficiency Manitoba plan, programs include commercial ground source heat pumps, or installation of an electric furnace with thermal energy storage.

Demand Response is a portfolio of programs encouraging a shift in energy use away from times of high demand to times of lower demand. Manitoba Hydro is currently exploring opt-in Demand Response in partnership with Efficiency Manitoba.

A Curtailable Rate Program means that participating customers, typically large industrial companies, could receive a bill discount in exchange for agreeing to reduce their electricity demand when requested by the utility.

Explore details about how Manitoba Hydro plans to keep the lights on into the future. Go to 'news and stor-

Miniota News

Submitted

By Linda Clark

Shout out to the Virden AUD who brought George Canyon and Aaron Pritchert with 'Cowboy Christmas' to town. Beautiful Christmas music and the sing along which those who attended enjoyed immensely, sending us all home in the Christmas Spirit!

Congratulations to first time grandparents and great grandparents, Sean and Vickie Laite and Roy and Dale Laite on the arrival of their granddaughter, Jovi Oslie, born to Rory and Jon Lawless on Dec. 9.

Miniota Municipal Services for Seniors held their annual potluck Christmas supper on Dec. 10. Despite a small turnout, we enjoyed a most bountiful and delicious supper. Following supper and visiting, it was wonderful to have the Decker Hutterian Colony choir entertain us with their beautiful music.

The White Gift service was held on Sunday, Dec. 14 with wonderful donations for the hampers to be prepared. The names for the Memory Tree were read at this service and our memory tree is to be enjoyed at Memory Park.

The Parkissimo Lodge board along with Brenda Still provided a lovely Christmas meal for the lodge residents, followed by fellowship and entertainment.

at the piano shared worship with the residents at the our news. Happy New Year to all!

Sherwood Home in Virden prior to Christmas. Fellowship was enjoyed.

As I write this, it has just rained, the wind blows fiercely, and this ice could be more than treacherous. Be safe folks on the streets and the roads!

Merry Christmas and all the best in 2026 to all our readers, near and far.

"Christmas is not just a story of a birth, it's the story of a love so great, He stepped into our darkness to bring light. A gift not wrapped in paper, but in grace, mercy and everlasting hope."

Isabella News

The Isabella community potluck supper was held on Sunday, Dec. 14 at our hall. Grace was given by Linda Clark, following which she invited each table to light the candle on their table in memory of family and friends lost this past year. Following a very full table of delicious food, Linda shared some 'Elf' jokes, 10 Reasons Why Farmers Might be Santa, and Hazel Wall read the children, big and little, 'The Night Before Christmas." We then had a Christmas singsong prior to Santa arriving. A wonderful community evening!

Sympathy is extended to Hazel Wall and her family on the death of family member Fred Proden of Selkirk. Many of you will remember Fred when he worked for Johnnie and Hazel and attended all the Isabella dances.

Avery Merry Christmas to all our readers, near and far. Also, a Merry Christmas to the staff at Crossroads, the The Miniota United Church choir with Lynne Cornish Virden Empire-Advance and the Outlook, who bring us — les at www.nydro.mb.ca

empireadvance.ca

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✓ National Headlines

☑ Obituaries

☑ Photo Galleries



From the prairies to the Highlands Tour 204 part 16

By Gerry Nolan RIVERS BANNER

Such a sad day, as it is our last day in this beautiful country. We had to say goodbye to Andrea Tolton as well as she was catching the train back to London.

We had planned to go to the William Wallace Monument situated at Abbey Craig just outside Sterling. The monument has approximately 246 steps up to the top of the tower, so after taking a vote to climb or not to climb, it was a unanimous decision to not climb! The previous workout at Edinburgh had been enough for all of us, so we drove to West Lothian where Midhope Castle, known as Lallybroch to Outlander fans, is a semi-derelict sixteenth century tower house. We didn't venture on the tour as visitors are not allowed inside. Instead we gazed from a distance and admired the architecture, brought some mementos, then boarded the bus and headed to Linlithgow for lunch. We dined at the Bridge restaurant. It sits at Linlithgow bridge near the Linlithgow palace, which was built in the sixteenth century as a coaching inn.

After lunch we boarded the bus and headed back to Falkland for our last extended happy hour and dinner at the Coventry Restaurant.

Our group was splitting up the next morning as Eric and Shane were going to Norway and Donald and Devon were heading to Mallorca Spain. The rest of the group were coming back to Canada.

With the Twentieth of August arriving the next day, meant we had to pack, have a quick breakfast, leftover



PHOTO BY CELIA NOLAN

Midhope Castle.

food disposed of and the re-cycling, which proved to be quite an ordeal and be ready to leave at 8 A.M.

The drive to Edinburgh was a quiet one as we were all reflecting on our journey together. Having to say goodbye to not only Scotland but also to our Tour 204 family, left all of us teary eyed.

Arriving at Edinburgh we exited the bus for the last time. There were farewell hugs to the four who were continuing on to further adventures, as the rest of us with tears in our eyes proceeded to find our departure gate. What an emotional goodbye to Donald and Devon, Shane and Eric and Scotland.

Next year will be our final account of our Tour 204 holiday!

Holiday Eating

By Brittney Bartecki and Chantal Morais PMH REGISTERED DIETITIANS

To many, the holidays are about food, fun, and celebrating. However, some come to dread the holidays because of the guilt they feel about indulging in favourite festive foods. This guilt is called food shame, and it is common.

Christmas cookies

Here are 4 tips to help you feel less guilty while eating your holiday favourites

Be Mindful – Pay attention to hunger and fullness. This can empoweryou to make healthy choices and allow for more enjoyment and appreciation of the food. Be present with the food and take time to enjoy it whether alone or with your family and friends.

Nourish yourself – Eat satisfying foods regularly throughout the day. This includes short (carbs) and long (protein, fat) energy foods. Include a variety of carbs, protein, fat, fibre, and vitamins and minerals. This helps maintain your body's energy and mood levels. This also prevents extreme hunger or binging later in the day.

Be kind to yourself – Choose nourishing food while allowing your favourite foods without guilt. We eat different foods for different reasons, and this is normal and okay.

Keep moving – Move in a way that you enjoy, involve your friends or family if you wish. Fresh air is great if it is even for a few minutes.

Remember, dieting and restricting food intake can lead to eating more than you intended. Be gentle with yourself as you navigate the endless messaging of needing to control your food intake. Take time and enjoy all your favourite flavours of the holiday season!

The 12 Days of Christmas - But make it self care

Submitted

Prairie Mountain Health

Because nobody really wants 23 birds and a pear tree for Christmas...here are 12 gifts for your mental health instead. During the holidays we typically focus on the giving of gifts, food, time and energy and we are here to remind you that you need cared for too. So, let's give ourselves the 12 Days of Christmas Self Care Edition.

These suggestions are bite-sized additions to your holiday schedule. So, whether you are squeezing it in or have time to fill, you can add them to your day.

Here is an easy checklist you can print or save to your phone as a reminder to give yourself the best gift of all, your time and attention.

Day 1 – A Quiet Moment: Gift yourself 10 minutes of silence — no phone, no TV, no demands. Just breathe and be.

Day 2-Gratitude: Write down 3 things you're thankful for. They don't need to be big. Finding small joys or "glimmers" are powerful.

Day 3 – Connection: Reach out to one person who fills your cup. A text, call, or coffee invite counts.

Day 4 – Movement: Give yourself 10–20 minutes of movement you enjoy such as stretching, yoga, walking, or dancing in the kitchen.

Day 5 – Get Outside: Spend a few minutes in fresh air. Look up at the sky. What can you notice around you?

Day 6 – Comfort: Enjoy a cozy comfort item such as a warm blanket, favourite socks, soft hoodie, or a warm drink.

Day 7 – Nourishment: Eat one meal or snack on purpose — not rushed, not distracted, not skipped.

Day 8 – Creativity: Do something creative for 10 minutes like colouring, baking, crafting, writing, music, or decorating.

Day 9 – Boundaries: Say no to something that drains you or delegate a task that doesn't need to be yours.



Sitting and reading a book is good for your health.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Day 10-Laughter: Watch, read, or do something that makes you laugh. Humour is a great form of medicine.

Day 11 – Declutter Something Small: Start small with an area like your junk drawer, purse, nightstand and reclaim it.

Day 12 – Celebration of You: Write down 3 things

you are proud of from this year. No matter how big or small, they all count.

The holidays can be full, loud, and demanding or slow, quiet and lonely. These 12 gifts are reminders that your mental health matters too. You are worth time, care, comfort, and rest.

Winter's here: RCMP urge Manitobans to plan ahead and stay safe in snowy, icy conditions

Submitted by MB RCMP MEDIA RELATIONS UNIT

As the snow falls and temperatures plunge, Manitobans are being reminded to take the necessary precautions to remain safe when travelling out on the highway.

"Manitobans may feel like they know all about snow and ice, but the reality is that RCMP respond to a number of serious incidents on roadways, every winter that could have been prevented," said Sgt. Mark Hume, of the RCMP North West Traffic Services. "We want everyone to stay safe this winter by being prepared, driving to conditions and respecting closed highways."

Already this winter, there has been a number of vehicle collisions that can be attributed – at least partially—to motorists failing to drive to conditions. As cooler temperatures and snowy conditions continue to blow through the province, those incidents are likely to be compounded in the coming weeks with incidents involving snowmobiles.

There are a number of things Manitobans can do to stay safe:

· Check the forecast before heading out. Knowing what the weather is going to be like can better inform your decision-making, including whether you should be driving. Checking highway conditions at manitoba511.ca is a good idea if planning to hit the highway, as is making someone else aware of your travel plans.

· Make sure your vehicle is ready for winter. Equip your vehicle with winter tires, which provide improved traction. Keep an emergency kit in your trunk in case you run into a problem, such as booster cables and tow straps, blankets, nonperishable food, water and a shovel. Clear all snow and ice from your vehicle before you hit the road, as snow blowing off a roof can be a hazard to both yourself and other drivers. Make sure your cellphone is charged, in case you need to call someone for help.

· Drivers, slow down. Speed limits are set for ideal conditions, not winter weather. Slow down and

increase your following distance on icy or snowy roads. Be aware that conditions are generally just as slippery at 0 C than when it's -20 C or below, and ice usually forms on bridges and overpasses before roads.

• Dress to the conditions. If you are heading out on the road during winter, be prepared. Ensure everyone in the vehicle has winter clothing in case your vehicle gets stuck or you need to pull over due to highway conditions.

· Drive sober and without distraction. No matter the time of year, never drive a vehicle, snowmobile, or ATV while impaired by alcohol or drugs. Before heading out, find a designated driver or plan to take public transit, a taxi or rideshare service home. Similarly, put your cellphone down when behind the wheel.

"Educating yourself on how best to prepare for severe winter conditions will go a long way towards ensuring your safety and wellbeing as well as the safety of those around you," said Hume.

Westman Communications Group announces 2026 Board of Directors

By Brandi Crowe
Marketing Manager

Brandon, MB-Westman Communications Group (WCG) has appointed its 2026 Board of Directors. Announced at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 29, the 2026 Board of Directors will comprise 11 members, including four new appointees.

WCG members democratically elect the Board of Directors, which consists of representatives from across the communities it serves. This year's new appointees include Brent Ewasiuk (Forrest), Gillian Halwas (Inglis), and Chris Sobchuk (Brandon) (re-elected) as Board Directors, and Tamra Rapsky (Minnedosa) as Treasurer.

Returning members include Dan Robert-

son (Brandon) as Board Chair, Savaughn Peddle-Hastings (Souris) as 1st Vice Chair, Mike Brolund (Brandon) as 2nd Vice Chair, Gail Janz (Brandon) as Secretary, and returning as Board Directors are Dave Mahoney (Brandon), Terry McLenehan (Minnedosa), and Lorne Zacharias (Elm Creek).

"I'd like to congratulate and warmly welcome our 2026 Board of Directors," said WCG President & CEO Bud Keys. "The Board, democratically



Meet the new team.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

elected by our members, reflects the diverse communities we serve across the Westman region. This group of 11 community leaders plays a critical role in providing strategic direction. We look forward to working closely with them to ensure WCG continues to evolve and deliver exceptional value to all our members."

For more information on WCG's Board of Directors, visit westmancom.com/about-us/company-profile/board-of-directors.

About Westman Communications Group

Westman Communications Group (WCG) is a member-owned cooperative operating broadband systems across Manitoba. WCG is an industry leader in communications, offering fibre-powered Internet, IPTV and Phone services to residents and businesses in the region. WCG remains strongly committed to delivering value to its members and the communities it serves. Visit www.westmancom. com for more information.

Elkhorn students present a Christmas Variety Concert

By Ed JamesEMPIRE-ADVANCE

Itwascoldandicyoutside of Elkhorn school on Dec. 16, but inside it was filled with a large crowd and Christmas Spirit coming from the school children on the gym stage. The concert was a variety of classic and modern Christmas songs presented by all grades and the Elkhorn Tiny Tots.

The school's band program, under the direction of Mr. Miningas, showcased different band levels and theirskills. The senior band students did an excellent job of "Jingle Bells" with a slight jazz flavour.

The elementary students presented the Christmas spiritwith traditional songs, dancing and a rhythm band, while waving at parents and grandparents in the audience. They were a joy to watch.

Not to be outdone, the Grade 12 students put on two short plays, one a variation of Dickens's classic, "A Christmas Carol" with the three ghosts being teachers past, present and future. A second short presentation was "The Reindeer Reboot" with the pitfalls of AI and modern technologies at the heart of the play. All too soon, the afternoon concert drew to a close with a final act featuring all students on stage for a rousing version of "Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer ' and "Santa Clausis coming to town."

The lively Christmas concert was filled with magic and laughter for both the children and the audience.

May you have a very happy and safe holiday season and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year!



The Grade 6 beginner band students.



PHOTOS BY ED JAMES

The Elkhorn School Christmas Concert finale with all the students on stage.



The Gr. 4 rhythm band playing "Jingle Bells"



The grade 12 skit "The Reindeer Reboot"











Winners of the 2025 Decorating Contest



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

After careful review of all the houses who entered, and calculating the results, the winners are: First place Rick and Brenda Smith - 280 4th Ave(Top picture); Second place Colleen Gibson - 609 Government Road South(Bottom left picture); Gord and Kim Halowaty - 242 King Street East (Bottom right picture).















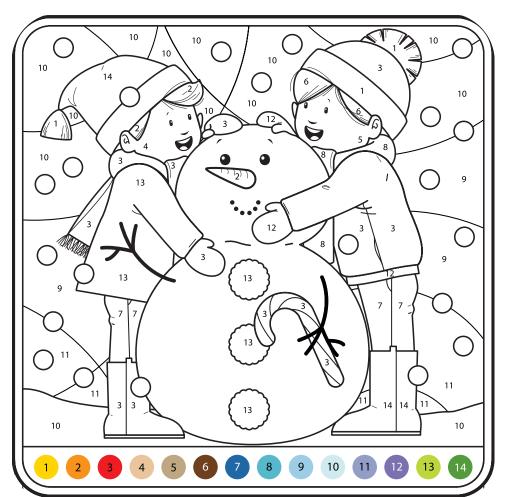




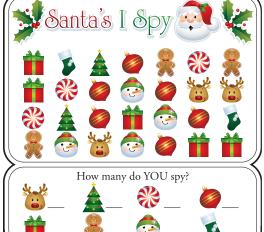




Holiyay FUN







Jokes That Sleigh!

What kind of currency do they spend in the North Pole?

Jingle bills

Where does Santa keep his money?

The snowbank

What do you call a reindeer with bad manners?

Rude-olph

What do snowmen call their kids?

Chill-dren

What did the elf use when he sprained his ankle?

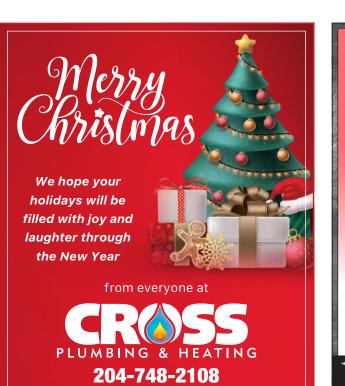
A candy cane

How much does Santa pay to park his sleigh?

Nothing, it's on the house!













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MP Mazier says Canadians should be very concerned

By Anne Davison EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Liberals' Bill C-9 seeks to broaden criminalization of words and emotions. Bill C-9 is titled, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places).

The Preamble to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states: "Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law". We're not a theocracy, but this great country was built upon a firm foundation and Bill C-9 is seen by many as undermining that foundation

While Conservatives protest Bill C-9, is that enough? Well, many MPs say they have heard from constituents.

Here's the scoop from the National Post: "Opposition Conservatives say a deal between the governing Liberals and the Bloc Québécois to remove a religious exemption from Canada's hate-speech laws, in exchange for passing a bill targeting hate and terror symbols, is an "assault" on freedom of speech and religion."

In a social media video post, The Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner, PC, MP for Calgary Nose Hill said of the amendments to Bill C-9, "It removes the Attorney General's consent so that police can charge you directly," she said. "And it opens the door ... frankly my concern is, it opens the door for politically motivated arrests."

In response to questions from the Empire-Advance, Dan Mazier, MP for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa confirmed that the amendments to C-9 were introduced on Dec. 2.

Mazier said, "I am very concerned with Bill C-9. I view it as an attack on religious freedoms."

He pointed to an op-ed in the National Post by Andrew Lawton: "Liberals wage unnecessary war on religious freedom with Bill C-9" | National Post. The subtitle of Lawton's writing tells that Canadian law already has teeth: "Genocide advocacy is already criminalized but not enforced".

Mazier goes on to say, "Since the introduction of these amendments, Conservatives have pushed back on Bill C-9 at Justice committee. However, the Liberal Chair of the Justice Committee cancelled their December 4th meeting, which is very concerning, as it meant that we could not debate these amendments... I've received emails from concerned Canadians who want to know their religious freedoms will be protected, and this is no time to delay."

According to the House of Commons website: Meeting No. 14 of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights (rescheduled for Dec. 9) is suspended and will resume at a later date.

Mazier added, "Right now, Canada's existing laws on hate speech are clear that individuals cannot be prosecuted for expressing, "in good faith," an argument or opinion about a religious subject or a belief based on a religious text. The Supreme Court recognized this defence as necessary to keeping Canada's hate speech laws constitutional.

"Another safeguard currently in place is the requirement that the Attorney General consent to proceedings for hate-propaganda offences.

Mazier referred to the Liberal Chair of the House of Commons Justice Committee, Marc Miller's comments where he said, "there was 'clear hatred' in some books of the Bible."

Mazier said, "All Canadians should be very concerned about this bill, especially with the new amendments, which will not protect people of faith but will instead open them to criminal prosecution for something as simple as quoting their own sacred texts."

"We do not have a timeline for how quickly this bill could pass into law," Mazier said. It will undergo further study at the Justice Committee.

Ted Falk, MP for Provencher spoke in Parliament against the bill and expressed concern for freedom of religion. Liberal Parliamentary Secretary Leslie Church responded saying the definition of hate speech is "communicating statements in a public place and inciting hatred against any identifiable group where such an incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace."

Note the term, 'likely'.

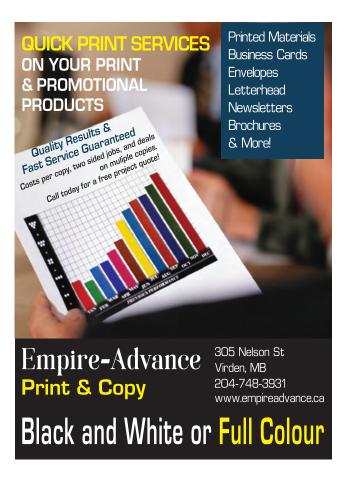
Church goes on to say, "Those who spread hate need to be accountable for it and law enforcement needs the tools to police it."

Found at the link, "JUST - Home - House of Commons of Canada" (Standing Committee on Justice

and Human Rights) a Professor of Law, Queen's University Bruce Pardy spoke as an individual saying, "The government seeks to criminalize an emotion: 'hatred means the emotion that involves detestation or vilification and that is stronger than disdain or dislike'. It is criminal to detest but legal to dislike, but to detest, of course, means to intensely dislike—that's the meaning of the word—so it will be legal to dislike but criminal to intensely dislike."

Pardy asks, "Where is the line between dislike and intensely dislike? Of course, nobody knows that. The line will be drawn wherever the authorities want it to be drawn to punish speech that the government hates."

Bill C-9 has passed first and second reading and is under consideration in committee. Parliament has recessed and is set to resume on Jan. 26, 2026. www.parl.ca/legisinfo/en/bill/45-1/c-9



Letter to the Editor

RE: Wetlands - Look to the South

What would you say if I could tell you that there is a "service" that can control floods, filter excess nutrients and pollutants from water, can recharge/ replenish groundwater, can mitigate against climate change, and can offer a safe place for wildlife—birds, fish, insects. It sounds too good to be true! What an amazing service that has to be!

Now most of us don't have to go too far to see this service in action. I'm referring to WETLANDS. According to Ducks Unlimited, Canada has 25% of the world'sremaining marshes, bogs, swamps and potholes. What is alarming, is that, despite these amazing benefits, wetlands are being drained and /or filled in at an astounding rate.

Here in Brandon, you don't have to look too far to see wetlands. If you drive south on 18th street/highway 10, just as you pass Patricia Street, look west and you will see a body of water surrounded by cattails and other plant growth. It is very beautiful and almost calming. It is fairly large, about 90 acres, and the wetland extends beyond the open water, including the soil/ground nearby that is saturated with water and a supports variety of plant species like hard stem bullrush, river bullrush, and broad -leafed cattail.

As you move around this province you will see many

types of wetlands. There actually is a wetland classification system. The criteria for the system is based on length of water retention, type of vegetation associated with it, and soil type in it. It ranges from Class 1, which has water retained for one week or less, to Class 5 which has water year-round with permanent open water in the centre. Currently, we don't have a wetland inventory and monitoring system, so the data is incomplete about how many wetlands we are losing each year. The City of Brandon Environment and Sustainability staff is working on identifying and classifying wetlands within the city and this will be very helpful in conserving this vital eco-system.

So how do wetlands work?

Wetlands act like sponges: soaking up rain and melted snow and slowly releasing water during drier seasons. Wetlands clean our water: acting as natural filters, they slow the flow of water, so bacteria, algae and plants can break down contaminants, which then are removed by sedimentation. Wetlands trap and store carbon: capturing carbon in plants and soil instead of releasing it into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide. Wetlands offer critical wildlife habitat: giving many species places to rest, feed and raise young.

I have concerns about that specific wetland I have

described, because it is within our city limits. There is a system in place to protect wetlands.

We have the "Water Rights Act" and "Water Rights Regulation" and is based on the "Wetland Classification System" Within those regulations, I quote: "under normal circumstances, a water right license will not be issued for the drainage of a Class 4(semi-permanent) and Class5(permanent) wetlands". I have been told that the wetland in question is a Class 4, although, in reading through the classification key, I think it might be a Class 5—has permanent open water in the central areas.

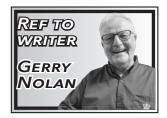
Understanding the benefits of wetlands and knowing how valuable they are for everyone, it becomes our responsibility to ensure they are protected. It is important for the city, the province, the developers ,and the citizens of Brandon to work together and allow this vital eco-system to do the job of of cleaning and filtering the water, holding on to water to mitigate both floods and droughts, creating homes, and nesting sites for many different creatures that exist along side us, and capture and store carbon to help us in our fight against climate change. According to the Water Rights Act/ Regulation, this beautiful wetland is protected. It has rights!

Simply put: Leave It Alone! Don't jeopardize it in any way!

Scott Blyth Brandon , MB

SPORTS

REF MEMORIES



A couple of incidents that occurred while I was officiating a game were severe injuries. I saw a player break his leg, another player get a concussion from a hit as well as a

separated shoulder injury. Officiating mostly senior hockey, I always had injuries in the back of my mind as these guys have to go to work the next day!

One night in Elkhorn, Troy Frederick had fallen down going forward and ended up in the direct path of a shot taken by Hal Haight from Cartwright. Hal could really fire the puck. Hal takes a slapshot which was blocked by Frederick. He ducked his head down and the shot hit him on the back of his neck. Frederick was yelling in extreme pain, the play just stopped and the Elkhorn arena went silent. After a few moments Frederick was helped off the ice and taken to the hospital. Turns out he was okay, thank goodness. It was just a freak play where something went bad.

Chris Hunt from Kenton, James Ramsey from Cardale were a couple of other players who were hurt. Some players quit playing for risk of injury because they knew they had to go to work the next day. I think there were players who were on unemployment insurance for the winter that did not care if someone got hurt or not. Because they did not have to work, I felt they were playing chippy hockey.

I am sure there were also a lot of guys who played hurt, went to work hurt. As an official, I had my share of injuries to work through because I was going to work as well.

I did some evaluating of officials over the years and one question I always asked, are players in the games you officiate getting hurt? If they are, you better take stock of what penalties you are calling. Nobody is making a living playing the game, let's all get home safely. Nothing wrong with a good hard hit, that is part of the game but keep it within the rules.

Winnipeg Jets in a slump

By Gerry Nolan

EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Winnipeg Jets are in a slump and that is putting it mildly. The team that won the President's Trophy last season for the best regular season is a shadow of itself this season. They have 14 wins and 15 losses and a overtime loss for 1 point at this juncture of the season. They sit in 13 out of 16 teams in their conference, they are 5 points out of a playoff spot and are only 4 points out of last place in the Western Conference of the National Hockey League. What is wrong with the Winnipeg Jets? Well there are probably a few theories and with that here is mine.

Losing Connor Hellebuyck was critical. Last season he won the Hart Memorial Trophy as the most valuable player in the National Hockey League. Many thought, well he has a good defensive team in front of him, correct? The defence is basically the same as last year. I think Connor Hellebuyck covered a lot of holes in the defensive aspect of his club's success.

The Winnipeg Jet hockey club has not had a second line centre since Brian Little played and that's a few seasons ago. Season after season the club tried to fill that role but have failed. They feel they have a player with the Manitoba Moose who will fill that role in years to come, but maybe they are wrong on that.

Free agent players that the team signed this season are Cole Koepke for a million dollars, he has produced 2 goals, 4 assists and is minus one. Tanner Pearson, 4 goals 1 assist plus 3 for a million dollars. Gustav Nyquist 0 goals 6 assists minus 1 at \$3.25 million a season. Jonathon Toews 3 goals 6 assists and minus 13 for 2 million bucks. The team felt Jonathan Toews would be their second line centre. He has not played in 3 seasons and had been suffering from long term covid. Jonathan

Toews is trying to fill a void in their team that in no way could he ever expect to fill after being away for 3 years.

The Winnipeg Jets are the oldest team in the league. They have no rookies playing with them this season. Surely their farm team the Manitoba Moose have some players that could or should be playing with the team, or have they not picked well in the draft?

Nic Ehlers left the team as they could not or did not want to sign him last year. They have not filled his spot. Many thought Cole Perfetti would bridge the gap, in my eyes he is a bust!

Mark Schiefle, Kyle Connor and Gabriel Valardi do almost all the scoring for the team with not much after that. Only 2 other players have scored 6 goals each in 30 games. They have 7 plus players with less than that amount. Even the much maligned Logan Stanley the teams sixth defensemen has 4 goals and 10 points and is 8th in team scoring.

Obviously last season must have been just luck because the same team this year has no rookies and is out of the playoffs as we speak.

I believe the change comes at the top. The General Manager, Kevin Cheveldayoff. I can't see this happening as he has a long term contract signed after last season. He will not make trades and he will not go with youth. He only wants veteran players who are not producing goals and wins.

The club has 8 or 9 players who are great third and fourth line players. They have no second line players. This means they need a centreman and 2 wingers. Where are they coming from?

Could you really expect Jonathon Toews, who has not played in three seasons, to come in and be your second line centre? It is insane to think he could fill that role at age 37. Tanner Pearson and Gustav Nyquist have been healthy scratches and sit in the press box. How are they great off-season free agent signings? Why not play the rookies? Their numbers could not be any worse, could they?

What about a trade? Who are they trading and what are they getting back? Nobody on the Manitoba Moose are up with the Jets so there does not appear to be any depth there. How are you going to get second line players when all you have to offer is third line players? The team is in big trouble and we all know if the team is not winning, the support they currently have will disappear. It has been that way for years!

It will be too bad if the team wastes the prime years of their great players! Right now they have no leverage to make a trade and that is why it is hard to see them make much of an improvement this year. Chicago, SanJose, Anaheim are going with youth and it has paid off for them. At least they are fun to watch, the Winnipeg Jets, not so much!

North Central Hockey League

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The North Central Hockey League, like some other senior hockey leagues, is

now defunct. The league was formed back in 1958, and the first league president was Bruce Knight of Decker Manitoba. It seemed that every town had a local senior hockey team and it was a great way to keep your local rink open as well visit with friends and neighbours. Communication was rather limited back in those days. I remember when the league had 15 or 16 teams. Communities created a team hoping you would create life-long friends.

In the North Central area only Virden, Rivers and Minnedosa have a team and they play in the only senior league left around here the Tiger Hills Hockey League.

I thought I would share the past league Champions of the North Central Hockey League. If you played on one of these Championship teams, I invite you to contact me and share your story of the time your team was league Champion. How was the game played back in the years gone differently from today's game?

So here we go,. the first teams to win the Championship were the Rossburn Hornets in 1958, Minnedosa Jets in 1959, Cardale Cougars in1960. Elphinstone Legionnaires in 1961, CJATC Rivers 1962, Shoal Lake Bisons 1963, Elphinstone Legionnaires 1964, Cardale Cougars 1965. Elphinstone Legionnaires in 1966, 1967 and 1968, Birtle Bruins 1969, Angusville Flyers in 1970, Foxwarren Falcons in 1971, McCauley Tigers 1972 and 1973, Rivers in 1974, Kenton Cougars 1975,

Elkhorn Canadians 1976, Angusville Flyers 1977. In 1978, 1979, 1980 Elkhorn Canadians, Angusville Flyers 1981, Rossburn Hornets 1982, St. Lazare Outlaws 1983, Shoal Lake Eagles 1984, Foxwarren Falcons 1985. Sioux Valley Dakotas 1986, Shoal Lake Eagles 1987, Sioux Valley Dakotas 1988 and 1989. St. Lazare Outlaws 1990, Foxwarren Falcons 1991, Roblin North Stars 1992, Russell Rams 1993, Foxwarren Falcons 1994, Russell Rams 1995, and 1996. Miniota Night Hawks 1997, Oak Lake Icemen 1998, McCreary Mustangs 1999.

Miniota Night Hawks 2000, then Foxwarren Falcons won 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Roblin North Stars 2008. Grandview Comets 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012. Miniota-Elkhorn C-Hawks 2013 and 2014. Grandview Comets 2015, Moosomin Rangers 2016, Miniota-Elkhorn C-Hawks 2017, Grandview Comets in 2018. Miniota-Elkhorn C-Hawkswere league Champions in 2019, 2020 and 2022. COVID-19 shut down the league in 2021.

The league folded in 2023. Many players played in this great league for a number of years and were the sole entertainment for many through the winter. Sadly, all we have are our memories as we watched our favourite team compete to become League Champions. If you have a story or a memory of a story you would like to share about your championship season or any story on the old North Central Hockey League, please Email me gerry.hawks0@gmail.com I will be anticipating some great stories to share within our Rivers Banner and Virden Empire Advance region!

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Virden's Laramie Collen enjoys the

By Robin Wark **EMPIRE-ADVANCE**

"Growing up, I always loved the event and knew that's what I wanted to

do," the son of Ann and Wendell Collen said. "I'd say my favourite part is that there's no shortcuts in tie-down roping. How much you put into it is how much you're gonna get out of it. It's a tough event, you make one mistake and it could take you right out of the money, so it pushes you to be perfect, and that's what I like about it."

Collen's roping skills have taken him to the postsecondary ranks. He is in his second year of studying and roping at Howard College in Big Spring, Texas. As well as tie-down roping, Collen competes as a heeler in the team roping event. He is studying agribusiness.

"I've enjoyed my time at Howard College and everything about it," Collen said. "The professors are really good and help you out any way they can. My coaches have been really good to me and have helped me in so many ways, in and out of the arena. Head coach Justin Jenkins and assistant Kyle VanDerLeest have gone above and beyond for me and it has made me better as a roper and as a person. The Jenkins family is like a second family for me. They have supported me my entire time at Howard College. Kyle VanDer-Leest has helped me a lot this year. Kyle has let me ride his heel horse, Jimmy, at the college rodeos and I appreciate everything he does to help me. John Sharp, my assistant coach last year, now at (Eastern New Mexico University), has had a big impact on me during my time at school. John has been the person in my corner that has made a big difference in my life."

He also appreciates what Big Spring, a west Texas community of about 22,540, has to offer. Collen said:

"My favourite part about Texas is definitely the weather. It's pretty warm here in the winter compared to home, that's for sure. Another favourite part of mine is the people. There's a lot of people, like the Jenkins family, that have helped me in and out of the arena. There are lots of resources to help you get better down here, and it has sure helped me."

Collen's family has been a big part of his rodeo journey. He said, "They

have done it all for me: from untying calves to driving the long distance to get to rodeos. My parents have always pushed me to do my best and work hard in the classroom and in the arena. They are definitely my biggest supporters and I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them.'

His sister, Abby Collen, has also played a big role.

Virden's Laramie Collen ropes a calf.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Collen said, "She has helped me set up classes and helped me with the ins and outs of going to college. She spent a year and a half at Dawson Community College in Glendive, Montana, and is now at Eastern Wyoming College in Torrington, Wyoming. Abby is the one who opened my eyes to going to school and competing on a rodeo team."

By Robin Wark **EMPIRE-ADVANCE**

he Virden Oil Kings battled back to earn an important victory over the Rivers Jets last week.

The Jets, sitting in second place in the Tiger Hills Hockey League, held a 3-1 lead halfway through the second period on Dec. 12. The Oil Kings rallied for a 6-3 victory.

"That was obviously a really big game to see where we are at in the league. ... That was a big win. Hopefully, we can build off that," Oil Kings defenceman Dillin Stonehouse said.

The win improved the Virden team's record to 7-3-0-0. As of Dec. 15, they sat fifth in the standings of the 14-team THHL. The Oil Kings host the MacGregor Wild on Dec. 20. They play Jan. 3 in Minnedosa.

In Virden last week, the Jets struck first with a goal by Luke DeCorby on the power play. Before the period was over, Brad Bowles answered with an Oil Kings power play goal to tie the game at 1-1.

In the first 10 minutes of the second session, Jackson Keeble and DeCorby scored to give the Jets a 3-1 lead. The Oil Kings started to battle back. Keifer Johnston scored just 45 seconds after DeCorby's goal to make it 3-2. Bowles got his second of the night to tie things up at 3-3 with 41 seconds left in the second period.

With 3:36 gone in the third period, Stonehouse scored the game-winning goal on a five-on-three powerplay. He said, "We had control in the five-onthree and I was able to get a shot through from the point that found the back of the net."

Elisha Bambridge scored for Virden to give the Oil Kings a 5-3 lead. Bowles got his fourth goal of the evening as he scored shorthanded into an empty net. Defenceman Nolan Wallace assisted on the first



The Virden Oil Kings' Brad Bowles put home the rebound of teammate Dylan Halliday's shot.

two third period goals as well as Bowles' first-period marker. What allowed the Oil Kings to score three goals in the third period?

"We had been pushing and out-chancing them through the first two periods, controlling a lot of the play as well," Wallace said. "We continued to just stay consistent in our game and finally were able to break through. Our defence did a great job defending and getting the puck up to our forwards' hands, and our forwards did a great job working the puck in the offensive zone. We played a great, connected team game and I think the third period was a great showing of that."

For Rivers, Riley Lamb made 20 saves. Duncan Paddock had 18 saves to backstop the Oil Kings to win. When asked what allowed the Oil Kings to come back, Johnston said:

"Just a consistent effort after we found ourselves down 3-1. Our powerplay got a chance early in the third that put us up. After that, Dunc made a few big saves for us, and a guy like Bowles just wills everyone else to step up and close it out."

GROSS MAKES BIG SAVES AS OIL CAPITALS ROOKI

By Robin Wark **EMPIRE-ADVANCE**

irden Oil Capitals goaltender Micky Gross has

seemingly made the jump from U18 AAA to the junior ranks with aplomb.

As of Dec. 14, the rookie goaltender had six wins in nine appearances. He had posted a 3.04 goals against average. What has allowed the 18-year-old to be successful in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League?

"I've been trying to go to the rink every day with a purpose - trying to get a little better every day," Gross said. "Our practices are really good and high-paced, which is really good for me, I think, to help me adapt to the speed because that's a big difference between the two leagues. I'm just trying to work hard every day and get better."

The Oil Capitals did not return any netminders from the last campaign. With Gross' emergence as a rookie, the Virden team boasts a strong tandem in goal, with the youngster teaming up with 20-year-old Braxton Burdeny, who was acquired via trade before the season.

"Micky has had a good start to his junior career," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "He works on the details to his game in practice, and he works hard in the gym off the ice. He understands that he needs to be ready to take the net at any time and he and Braxton have a really good working relationship. He has benefited from talking with Braxton and learning from a veteran junior guy. Micky is a big guy who moves well, but is quiet in the net by being very good positionally. He has shown nice growth already, and we look forward to what the rest of the season will look like for him."

In Virden, Gross is supported by the Oil Caps staff, his billet mom Michelle Gervin, and his teammates. He said the team's veterans have been great. Gross has appreciated being able to learn from Burdeny.

"He's awesome to kind of look up to as a role model," Gross said. "Just his poise and how he holds himself around the rink, during games, and in practice. ... He's obviously been in the league for a few years and he kind of knows the ropes."

He also appreciates the effort hometown captain Ty Plaisier makes. Gross said, "Ty's always helping. If something doesn't go your way, he'll talk to you and say, 'Hey, it's all good.' He's always helping with including everybody. ... Just a great guy in the room too. He's pretty funny.'

Gross grew up in Cornwallis. He played his minor hockey in Brandon. Gross suited up in the U15 AAA and U18 AAA ranks for the Southwest Cougars. He said playing for the U18 Cougars was a great experience.

"My first year of U18, I don't think I was that well known," Gross said. "Tanner (Lewis, the Cougars head coach and a Virden product) - it was his year as coach - I think he took a chance on me a little bit. I will always be grateful to him for that. ... I just tried to work every day and get better."

Last season, he helped the Cougars sweep the Winnipeg Thrashers in the first round of the playoffs. During that campaign, his goaltending partner was Virden's Brodie Cameron, who is now playing for the Virden Collegiate Institute high school hockey team.

"I think that was really good because we were both kind of pushing ourselves in practice. He is a good goalie as well. Both battling for starts. It was a good, friendly competition."

In each of his last two seasons with the Cougars, Gross was called up as an affiliated player to serve as



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

Goaltender Micky Gross has been a valuable addition to the Virden Oil Capitals

a backup goaltender for the Oil Capitals. Although he did not see game action, Gross said he learned from the Oil Caps goalies who did: Nik Trakakis and hometown netminder Eric Reid. In addition, Gross got to see the junior game up close.

"It was a pretty cool experience ... Just to come up and watch the speed from the bench was pretty cool. It was almost mind-blowing. You watch a game on TV and it doesn't look quite as fast, but when you are right there at ice level, it's like 'Wow, this is good hockey and this is fast.' I think that helped show me where I need to be."

Now, Gross is at the Junior Alevel and making big saves.

By Robin Wark **EMPIRE-ADVANCE** The Virden Oil Capitals earned three of a pos-

sible four standings points on the road last week. The Oil Caps beat the Dauphin Kings 5-1. They fell 3-2 in overtime to the Neepawa Titans.

"We're pleased to get three of four points on the weekend, although we feel like we left a point on the table in Neepawa," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "I thoughtwe played a real good road game in Dauphin and

really stuck to our plan and capitalized on our chances." As of Dec. 16, the Oil Capitals had a 16-10-1-0 record. With 33 points, they sat tied for second in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League's MGEU West Division with the Titans. Dauphin led with 37 points.

The Oil Capitals wrap up their 2025 schedule this week playing the Swan Valley Stampeders on the road on Dec. 18 and hosting the Stamps on Dec. 19. The Virden team opens its 2026 schedule in The Pas on Jan. 3 against the Northern Manitoba Blizzard.

Worthington Wins Silver

Oil Capitals forward Colten Worthington helped Team Canada West earn the silver medals at the World Junior A Challenge. The event ran Dec. 7-13 in Trois-Rivières, Que. Team Canada West fell 5-1 in the gold medal game to the United States. Sweden beat Team Canada East 5-1 for bronze.

"I thought we were right in the fight the whole game, and we cannot be prouder of our players because our work ethic and structure was there," Team Canada West head coach Trevor Blevins stated on the Hockey Canada website. "[The United States] are very skilled, and we cannot take anything away from them, but our guys can hold their heads high. It was a great experience for our players, and it was a we some to be part of this tournament."

While Worthington was away, the Oil Capitals were also

withoutCohenLewko.The rookieforwardwasrecalled by the Saskatoon Blades of the Western Hockey League. Lewko played in three games for the Blades Dec. 12-14.

Oil Caps 5, Kings 1

The Oil Capitals lit the lamp twice in the first period and three times in the second on their way to a 5-1 victory over the Kings on Dec. 12. Liam Goertzen scored twice and recorded an assist. He was named the First Star. Virden's own Bryce Bryant had two goals and was the Third Star. One of his goals came on the power play. Defenceman Maddox Shindle

Second Star. It was not until the third period that Oil Caps when Kyle Weisgarber scored shorthanded. goalie Braxton Burdeny allowed a goal. He had 33 saves.

Justin Perreault stopped 37 shots for Dauphin. Havryil Simchuk scored the Kings' goal.

Titans 3, Oil Caps 2 OT

On Dec. 14, Oil Capitals defenceman Rhylan Baxter scored on the power play to knot the contest at 2-2. That allowed the Oil Capitals to force overtime and earn a point in the standings.

Virden had scored first in the game with veteran Noel Englot getting his ninth of the year. In the last two minutes of the opening frame, Neepawa's Cooper Kasprick tied things up at 1-1. Neither team scored in the second



The Virden Oil Capitals' Rhylan Baxter defends the Neepawa Titans' Grayson Slaney in a tight contest last week.

scored and had two assists. He was rewarded with the period. The Titans took a 2-1 lead in the third period

"In Neepawa, our first was just OK, and then we took the game over in the second and just couldn't find the back of the net," Ramsey said. "Tough to give up the shorthanded goal in the third, but happy to see the powerplay tie the game up. In overtime, we had a player fall creating a two-on-one and they capitalized. Some bad luck there, but I thought it was a good performance by our group."

Burdeny made 22 saves. For the Titans, Alex Myers turned away 33 shots.

It was the 150th contest in the MJHL for Virden hometown captain Ty Plaisier.

SPORTS

MJHL SEASON UPDATE



Congratulations to the Steinbach Pistons for becoming just the second team in the MJHL to pick up a win over the Niverville Nighthawks this season.

The Pistons needed overtime, but managed to edge the Nighthawks 4-3 on Dec. 5 in front of a packed crowd of 2,263 in Steinbach. Some teams won't draw that many fans all season – that's an astounding number.

That loss only motivated the Nighthawks, who fell to 22-1-1 with that loss, to start a new winning streak. And they took out their frustrations on the visiting Virden Oil Capitals, pasting them 11-2. The Oil Capitals had a team plus minus in the 30's prior to that beatdown. Now they're in the 20's.

Niverville then laid a 6-1 beatdown on the Selkirk Steelers, who are desperately trying to hold into fourth place in the East Division.

But after that, the Portage Terriers – who are now on nine-game winning streak - rallied from down two goals to edge the Nighthawks 3-2 last week and are now just four points back of top spot in the MJHL (though Niverville retains two games in hand).

Despite the recent losses, Niverville is now the No. 1 ranked team in the county. It's been a hot minute since a MJHL was tops in Canada.

Amere four points separated Niverville, Portage and Steinbach for top spot in the East Division heading into action Saturday. And all have more points than the West Division Dauphin Kings, who themselves only enjoyed a four-point lead on the Neepawa Titans. The Titans are starting to come on, having won seven of their last 10 starts heading into a Saturday night clash with the Waywayseecappo Wolverines.

• The Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries MJHL Players of the Week come from the same two teams who dominated November's monthly awards.

The first winner is Calyb Moore from the Niverville Nighthawks. The forward had six assists along with one goal for a seven-point week in three games.

Teammate Evan Panzer was also a winner as he scored six goals in three games.

The final winner is forward Drayden Uhrina from the Portage Terriers. He scored two goals and added four assists in three games to earn his honour.

•From the trade front, the Northern Manitoba Blizzard made a couple of deals to bring in some players. The first was acquiring forward Carson Meyer from Battlefords of the SJHL for a player development fee (PDF). The Okotoks, Alta., product only appeared in two games with the Battlefords this year. Last year he put up 17 points in under 18 AAA.

The Blizzard also brought in goaltender Matthew Bradley from the SJHL's Flin Flon Bombers for a PDF. The American netminder was 4-2-0 this year in Flin Flon with a 3.01 GAA and a .896 save percentage. That leaves the Blizzard with three netminders (Keagin Kelln and Nick Kunyk being the other).

The Winnipeg Monarchs acquired defenseman Rhett McAuley from the SJHL's La Ronge Ice Wolves for a PDF.

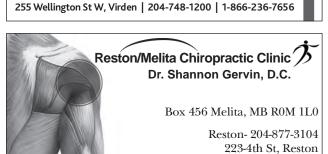
The Portage Terriers acquired forward Dylan Westmann from the Weyburn Red Wings for a PDF.

And the Winnipeg Blues shipped forward Eloi Robert to Granby of the QJHL for a PDF.









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- Perform other duties as assigned by the CAO or Council

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- Inspector certification (Parts 3 & 9) or trade background an asset

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In Loving Memory of

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Organization: Mid-West Arts Council (MWAC)

Job Type: Part-Time (20 hours per week, set office hours M, W, F from 12:00-3:00pm, hours remain flexible)

Rate of Pay: Negotiable, depending on experience

Position Summary: Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Arts Administrator is responsible for the operational, administrative, and financial management of the organization. The Arts Administrator oversees planning, coordination, and implementation of arts programming, marketing, and community outreach initiatives, and plays a key role in fundraising, budgeting, and partnership development.

Key Responsibilities: Administrative & Office Management, Program Coordination, Marketing & Networking, Fundraising & Grant Writing, Board & Committee Support

- · Experience with QuickBooks Online and Microsoft Suite. Canva, Square Space, and Studio Director program experience considered
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For full position listing of responsibilities and duties, please see www.midwestartscouncil.com Please send your resume to Celia Nolan: scrapquilter53@gmail.com



For the past 18 months the paper has been converting away from many years of ill-fated Corporate ownership to a private family owned business. Ownerpublishers are Ken and Christine Waddell (Christine was born and raised at Scarth (Virden area), daughter of the late Henry and Jean Lobel. The VEA needs another staff person to work with the current team performing the general duties as an on-site Publisher's Assistant.

Job Title: Publisher's Assistant

Job Location: Virden and area based out of VEA office

This staff person will provide assistance to the Publisher/Editor Ken Waddell and General Manager Jessica Coulter.

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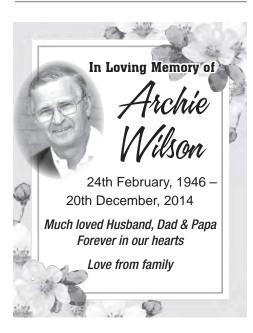
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For Sale

Farmland for Sale in RM of Pipestone

2025	2025
Assessment	Taxes
231,700	726.47
262,100	821.86
275,400	863.46
	Assessment 231,700 262,100

Land is located on Road 44N and 157 - 158 W. Land is classified as "E" soil on Crop Ins. All Land is presently pasture, meadow brome, -Brome fenced & dugouts.

Offering the S 1/2 of 14-8-27W as one unit. NE 10-8-27W as a separate unit.

Mineral and oil rights are exempt. Interested parties should rely on their own inspection. Highest or any offer, not necessarily accepted. 2025 taxes are paid, 2026 taxes will be paid by purchaser. S 1/2 14-8-27W has a MTS and a capped oil well site Caveat. Deadline for offers is Monday December 22, 2025.

For more information, call or text 204-748-5178.

Offers to be sent to:

Stewart Farms. Box 9, Pipestone MB R0m 1T0

Farmland for Sale in **RM of Pipestone**

2025 2025 Taxes Assessment NW 13-8-27W 187,200 \$586.92

Land is located on Road 45N 2 separate 80A titles

North Title - 65 acres broke South Title - 80 acres pasture

Mineral and oil rights are exempt. Interested parties should rely on their own inspection. Highest or any offer not necessarily accepted. 2025 taxes are paid. 2026 taxes will be paid by purchaser. Deadline for offers is Monday December 22,

For more information, call 204-748-1366.

Offers to be sent to:

Jack Welsh Box 1714 Virden, MB R0M 2C0

Tender

FOR LEASE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders to lease the pastured land situate in the Municipality of Pipestone and more particularly described below will be received by:

> MEIGHEN, HADDAD LLP 110-11th Street Brandon, MB R7A 4J4 Attention: Warren G. Barber, K.C.

Approximately 98.4 acres of pasture adjacent to Pipestone Creek in E 1/2 22-8-26WPM in the Municipality of Pipestone

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

- Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on the above or any other particulars or representations made by or on behalf of the landowner. The land is tendered for rent on an "as is" basis. All mines and minerals are reserved from the Lease Agreement.
- Tenders must be received on or before 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 31, 2025
- The lease term will be three (3) years commencing January 1, 2026. The Tender must specify the rent per acre payable for year one (1). Rent will be increased by two (\$2.00) dollars per acre in each of the two (2) subsequent years of the term.
- Rent plus GST is payable on April 1st annually.
- The party whose tender is accepted will be required to enter into a written Lease Agreement to be prepared by the solicitors for the landowners, a copy of which is available by contacting Warren G. Barber, K.C. at wbarber@mhlaw.ca or (204) 725-8461.
- The successful bidder shall be responsible for one half the costs associated with the preparation of the lease.
- Entry onto the land will not be authorized until the Lease Agreement is executed.
- Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

For further information contact Giovanni Colangelo at (204) 851-2101.

FOR SALE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders for the land described below will be received by: MEIGHEN HADDAD LLP, 110 - 11th Street, Brandon, Manitoba R7A 4J4 Atten: Trent B. Sholdice

FIRSTLY: ALL THAT PORTION OF THE NW 1/4 OF SECTION 7-7-25 WPM WHICH LIES SOUTH OF THE SOUTHERN LIMIT OF CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY RIGHT OF WAY PLAN 70 BLTO EXC ALL MINES AND MINERALS AS SET FORTH IN TRANSFERS R18842 AND R18897

SECONDLY: THE SW 1/4 OF SECTION 7-7-25 WPM EXC ALL MINES AND MINERALS AS SET FORTH IN TRANSFERS R18844 AND R18897

Roll No.'s 37500.000 and 37700.000 in the RM of Sifton

Title No. 3111609/2

FIRSTLY: THE NE 1/4 OF SECTION 12-7-26 WPM EXC FIRSTLY: CANADIAN PACIFIC RAIL-WAY RIGHT OF WAY PLAN 70 BLTO AND SECONDLY: ALL MINES AND MINERALS AS SET FORTH IN TRANSFERS R18844 AND R18897

SECONDLY: THE SE 1/4 OF SECTION 12-7-26 WPM EXC ALL MINES AND MINERALS AS SET FORTH IN THE ORIGINAL GRANT FROM THE CROWN

Roll No.'s 14550.000 and 145700.00 in the RM of Pipestone

Title No. 3111607/2.

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

- 1. Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on any representations made by or on behalf of the Vendor.
- 2. Tenders must be received on or before 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 9th, 2026.
- 3. Tenders must be accompanied by a deposit of 10% of the tender by cheque payable to Meighen Haddad LLP. Deposits accompanying unacceptable bids will be returned.
- 4. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE:

- 1. The closing of any purchase and sale resulting from an accepted tender will have an effective date of Monday, February 2, 2026 which shall be the Closing Date.
- 2. The bidder whose tender is accepted will be required to complete a formal agreement covering terms and conditions of sale.
- 3. The bidder whose tender is accepted must provide evidence of the purchased funds available under conditions acceptable to the Vendor within seven (7) days of the acceptance of the tender. If the balance of the accepted tender is not paid as of the closing date the deposit may be forfeited as liquidated damages and not as a penalty.
- 4. The Property Taxes will be adjusted as of the Closing Date.
- 5. The Vendor shall have access to the modular residence and buildings on the SE 12-7-20 WPM until May 1, 2026 to remove livestock and personal belongings.

For further information contact Trent B. Sholdice at 204-725-8768 or tsholdice@mhlaw.ca.

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Advertisements and state-

NDP bankrupting Manitoba; deficit double what projected to \$1.6 billion

Submitted

PC Caucus Manitoba

The Kinew government is forecasting continued deficit spending that will push the provincial debt to

over \$25,000 per Manitoban, which will lead to more NDP tax hikes on Manitoba families who are already struggling to make ends meet.

The province's 2025-26 second quarter financial update today shows that the NDP have failed to reign in spending and are now projecting a much larger \$1.7 billion, which is \$867 million higher than the NDP's own forecast in their spring budget. Manitoba's net debt is expected to climb to over \$38 billion this year, with debt servicing costs rising to well over \$2 billion annually. Revenues are down by over \$700 million due to NDP mismanagement and a struggling economy.

"The NDP have stalled Manitoba's economy, squandered the \$373-million surplus they inherited in 2023, and abandoned any path toward a balanced budget," said Official Opposition Leader Obby Khan. "In just two years, they've destroyed any progress with a complete lack of action to support businesses or respond to the impacts of Chinese and U.S. tariffs. It's been a dismal performance that has put Manitoba on an unsustainable path toward credit downgrades and more NDP tax increases."

The report shows that Manitoba's economic growth has fallen to second last across provinces as well. Manitoba's consumer price index rose 3% in October 2025, among the highest inflation rates in Canada, and unemployment has continued to hover around 6% this fall, which is 2% higher than in 2022.

NDP mismanagement is also wearing on everyday Manitobans, who are facing some of the highest foodflation in the country, according to Statistics Canada, with grocery prices only worsening. Projections show that the average cost of feeding a family of four could rise by nearly \$1,000 in 2026. Families with children now make up 45% of food bank users in Manitoba, a 40% increase from five years ago, per Harvest Manitoba.

This follows the last two years of the Kinew government taking more money out of Manitobans' pockets. The NDP plan to continue that agenda into the new year, including hiking property taxes, income taxes, Hydro rates, MPI rates, and more.

"Everyday Manitobans are struggling to make ends meet, and the root cause is government-driven price hikes," said Midland MLA Lauren Stone, PC Critic for Finance. "More working families are using food banks than ever before. They deserve answers as to why Wab Kinew and his finance minister have broken their promise to not raise taxes."

In total, the NDP have sneakily raised taxes by more than \$400 million on Manitobans, amounting to much more than Greg Selinger's PST hike.

This year, the Kinewgovernment quietly stopped indexing income tax brackets to inflation. That means if a Manitoban receives a wage bump to keep up with the cost of living—which is not an actual pay raise—they are now unprotected from being automatically knocked into a higher tax bracket. This move has cost Manitobans \$82-million more in taxes this year, a number that will grow every year.

The NDP also scrapped PCs' 50% School Tax Rebate, costing Manitobans \$330 million more. About 55% of Winnipeg homeowners and property owners are paying higher property taxes under the new system. With that, middle-class Manitobans are now paying the highest taxes in Western Canada, according to the Canadian Tax Federation. Property taxes and special charges in Manitoba soared by 19.5% year-over-year in 2025—by far the biggest jump in Canada.

"Despite receiving more than a billion dollars annually in growing transfers and revenues from the Liberal government, the NDP continue to spend beyond their means," said Stone. "As the NDP continues to tank our economy, the deficit will persist, debt will rise, and the province will be forced to borrow even more money adding interest costs Manitobans simply cannot afford."

"Finance Minister Adrian Sala's failure to control spending, grow the economy, or keep his promises show Manitobans how little they can trust the NDP to protect their future."

Liberal Government conceals deal after funding antisemitic speaker

Submitted

By Conservative Party of CA

On Dec. 11, from Ottawa, Ont. Rachael Thomas, Conservative Shadow Minister for Canadian Identity and Culture, and Melissa Lantsman, Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, released the following statement:

"Conservatives are shocked and disgusted by the Liberal government's decision to conceal the details of a secret settlement with Laith Marouf. Marouf is a raging antisemite who was awarded \$122,661 by the Liberals as part of Canadian Heritage's Anti-Racism Program to deliver anti-racism lectures.

"While receiving this significant amount from taxpayers, Marouf published vile antisemitic statements, including calling Jewish people 'loud-mouthed bags of human feces,' and even fantasized about shooting Jewish people.

"It was only after pressure from Conservatives that the Liberal government agreed to end their funding to Marouf and recover the taxpayer money he'd been given.

"Granting Marouf this money

wasamassive failure by the Liberals, and recovering the funds was the very least they could do to address the harm done to the Jewish community from this blatant misuse of taxpayer dollars.

"But now, through a written inquiry from Conservatives, we have learned that the Liberal government secretly struck a deal with Marouf and are refusing to make the details public. The Liberals failed to deliver on their promise and are trying to hide it from Canadians.

"At a time when antisemitism is rising across Canada, the government's secrecy only deepens the hurt felt by the Jewish community and further erodes public trust. If the Liberals truly believe in combating hate, they must release the full details of this settlement and explain why they are protecting Laith Marouf.

"Conservatives will continue demanding transparency, accountability, and a full explanation for how this government allowed taxpayer dollars to be funnelled to someone who spread hatred and violence-then chose to cover it up. Canada deserves better."

PCs call for external review into Manitoba Wildfire preparedness following repeat NDP mismanagement

Submitted

By PC Caucus Media

Following a pattern of negligence by the Kinew government leading up to one of the worst wildfire seasons in Manitoba, Progressive Conservatives are calling for a long-overdue external review into the province's lack of wildfire preparedness.

"Manitoba experienced one of its worst wildfire seasons in history this summer, and the province should have been more prepared," said Riding Mountain MLA Greg Nesbitt, PC Critic for Environment. "This is not about politics. Two afford to let that happen again."

Immediately upon taking office in 2023, Premier Wab Kinew declined to follow through on urgent plans approved by the previous PC government to conduct an external review of Manitoba's wildfire preparedness.

Documents recently obtained by the media now show that the NDP government conducted nothing more than internal wildfire response assessments that consisted

of only "meeting notes and verbal discussion" with no written recommendations about ways to improve future planning and operating procedures.

PCs are demanding that the province conduct a thorough external review before the 2026 wildfire season to identify any shortcomings that exist within the wildfire service. To ensure full transparency, Opposition and independent MLAs must also be kept privy throughout the review process, added Nesbitt.

"Having visited northern First Nations and communities, I've seen firsthand how much of Manitobans lost their lives. Thou-northern Manitobalacks crucial sands were displaced. We cannot resources to mitigate the spread of wildfires," said Nesbitt, who previously served as PC Minister of Natural Resources. "That's why I authorized the review as minister. I am completely shocked that the NDP cancelled it."

Between 2024 and 2025, the Kinew government has cut Manitoba's emergency expenditures budget by \$50 million, or 50%, as well as slashing the province's emergency management budget by \$1.1 million.

Something rotten in **Ottawa**

By Gerry Nolan **EMPIRE-ADVANCE**

Something stinks in Ottawa, I mean really stinks! Michael Ma crossed the floor from the Conservative party to the Liberal party. Now the last time I checked, Ma was voted in as a Conservative, not as a Liberal, therefore in my mind should not be allowed to do that as his constituents voted him in as a Conservative.

Perhaps, Michael Mashould be punted back to where he came from, Hong Kong, where he was born. Maybe take the rest of the Liberals with him!

The Liberal party has been courting Conservative members of parliament for months. Tim Hodgson did the courting as he represents the riding of Markham-Unionville. These 2 men have business connections and have worked together at the executive level. Do you smell anything rotting yet?

What did the Liberals offer him? Money, party status, what was it? We will never know the truth from the lying Liberal party.

The Liberal party won the election with a minority government, then that is how they should be operating. Currently they are paying off, bribing, consorting and are guilty of mischief in an attempt to gain a majority party. Is it not odd that the Prime Minister and his party can get away with this and the people of Canada stand back and let it happen. Mind Boggling!

Mark Carney, the Prime Minister of Canada is smiling ear to ear with these hypocrites who were Conservatives cross over to well, it could be hell!

Not so long ago Chris Barber and Tamara Lich the leaders of the FREE-DOM convoy spent time in jail and are now spending 12 months at home with 5 hours leave from their homes per week followed by a 6 month curfew. Digest that one folks! They also have to do 100 hours of community service. The mental abuse the Crown caused these individuals is huge, as the Crown wanted them to serve 8- and 7-year jail sentences respectively. Theywere also charged with counselling others to disobey court orders, initiated by the government. The Government also froze their bank accounts and took away their right to earn a living by the house arrest ruling. Call it what you may?

The Liberal party is crooked, that is in Canada with this leadership.

Ido hope Michael Ma, the conservative traitor when he goes back to Markham to his home, life will be anything but pleasurable for him.

Vince Lombardi, the greathead coach of the Green Bay Packers of the National Football League once said, If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything. Michael Ma stood up for the Conservative party and won his riding, now he has fallen into the Liberals lap!

Kenton 4-H club helping the homeless



UBMITTED PHOTO

A Christmas tradition that teaches these kids the importance of giving. L - R Back: Candace Tolton, Gloria Wilson, Kaiden McTavish, Robyn McNabb, Callen Tolton, Carrie Hodgins, Harmony Wilson, Levi Tolton. Front: Braxton Routledge, Rowan Stevenson, Ellie Gregory, Willy Weger, Tatum Routledge, Sawyer Stevenson, Zak Fordyce.

By Jessica Coulter

EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Kenton 4-H members packed 50 backpacks full of needed items for the homeless in Brandon this holiday season. Their communities helped by donating items. This club has been doing a 'Make a Difference' project in their club for over 16 years at Christmas time.

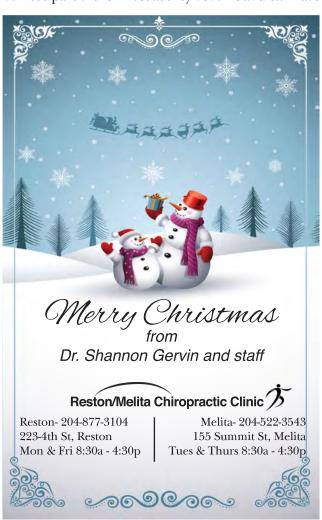
The backpacks contain hygiene items, socks, mitts,

and toques and other such practical items to gift to folks in need. They will be handed out Christmas morning, because everyone needs a gift Christmas morning at Samaritan House Ministries. This is such a thoughtful way to show folks who visit Samaritan House a safe and warm community truly cares.

"I believe introducing the youth to volunteering and making a difference in the lives of others at a young age shows them how important it is. And it then becomes a part of their lives as they become adults. I have witnessed members grow and are now adult leaders in our communities and continue to volunteer. It warms my heart every Christmas knowing our little club has helped make someone's day better," says Candace Tolton, Kenton 4-H Head Leader.











Community Christmas play raises funds for food cupboard









Papa tells Mrs. Dorkas "You have a good night... Merry Christmas, Mrs. Dorcas."

The bouncy bunch of reindeer.

PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On a very cold Saturday night, Dec. 13, the pews of the beautiful St. Paul's

United Church were filled and the atmosphere was distinctly warm as Papa began his reading of, The Night Before Christmas.

But before the main event, songsters drew the congregation into a caroling sing-a-long that ended with "Here Comes Santa Claus". Leona Joseph on mandolin and Krista Pedersen on guitar led the singing, Elizabeth Archambault played the viola and Jayenna Draper accompanied on the grand piano.

The Night Before Christmas was a hilarious play and

employed a large, local cast often with several members of a family getting in on the act. The fine acting of young and not so young actors made it truly fun.

The production was a fundraiser for Virden & Area Food Cupboard, supported by Black Gold Trucking Ltd. (refreshments afterwards) and Farley Kempthorne CPA, LLP (programs printing and tickets).

The players were: Donny Mead (Papa), Krista Kruse Pederson (Mama), and playing the children - Halle Irvine, Alivia Bennett and Schuylar Glendinning-Barre (also as mouse); Jennifer Glendinning (Mrs. Dorkas), Harvey Campbell (Nick the delivery man), and elves - Emily Mead, Mia Radwanski, Shelley Savy, and Ella

Archambault; Jenifer Cochrane (Mrs. Claus), Matt Russell (Santa); Sugar Plums were Jill and Mia Radwanski, Emily Mead and Ella Archambault; and Reindeer were Ella McCormick, Celest Holovach, Daphne Adams, Emma Irvine, James Holovach, Daphne Holleman, Alivia McCormick, McKenna Jamieson, and Tanis Podobni.

Behind the scene helpers were: Jill Radwanski (director), Paul Archambault (sound), Teagan Verner (makeup), Twila Wowk (hair, prompting and stage), Hannah Wowk (usher), Food Cupboard volunteers (prepared lunch) and Boston Pizza provided pizza between the afternoon and the evening presentations.







Merry Christmas from Virden Ford!

As we celebrate this joyful season, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our valued customers, staff and friends.

Your trust, loyalty, and continued support throughout the year mean the world to us.

From all of us at Virden Ford, may your holidays be filled with joy, warmth, and wonderful memories.



MARY MONTCOMERY SCHOOL SAVES CHRISTMAS!





SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Mary Montgomery School students, Grades K to 4 filled the stage at Virden's AUD Theatre on Dec. 11 for two shows of the musical, The Jingle Book. First came songs by the kindergarten classes. Grades 1 and 2 sang songs throughout the show and Grades 3 and 4 featured in musical performances. Grade 4s carried the narrative with speaking roles in this tale of adventure, goodwill, and the magic of Christmas where they aim to save Christmas and get the Jingle Book back to Father Christmas.





Wednesday, December 24th - Closed at 3PM Thursday, December 25th - Closed Friday, December 26th - Closed Wednesday, December 31st - Closed at 3PM Thursday, January 1st - Closed

sunrisecu.mb.ca







Wishing You a Season Guided by Faith

May loving kindness illuminate your path and bless your Christmas! Thank you for your continued trust in us, and for the gift of your friendship.

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The real story of Santa Claus: The saint behind the red suit

Submitted

BY CATHOLICS ONLINE CLASSES

You see Santa Claus everywhere today...in shops, in movies, on Christmas cards. But what many people do not know is this:

- · Santa Claus was once a real Catholic bishop.
- · His name was St. Nicholas of Myra.
- \cdot And his life was more amazing than any Christmas story.

Let's go back to where it all began...

The young boy who loved the poor

Nicholas was born in the 3rd century to a rich Christian family. But tragedy struck, he lost both parents at a young age. Instead of using their wealth for himself, he became famous for secretly giving to the poor. He would slip money into homes at night... leave coins in shoes... and help people without ever being seen. This is where the tradition began of:

- · Secret gifts.
- · Gifts in stockings.
- · Gifts in shoes.

Nicholas gave, not to be praised, but because he believed this, "If God has blessed me, someone else must smile."

The night he saved three girls

One of the most famous stories is this: A poor father had three daughters. They were old enough to marry, but he had no money for their dowries. In those days, it meant ruin. Nicholas heard this and came quietly at night. He dropped a bag of gold through their window. The next night, he did it again. The third time, the father stayed awake to see the giver. Nicholas tried to run—he wanted to stay hidden, but the father caught him and cried. Nicholas said only, "Thank God, not me." That love is what the world calls today... Santa Claus.

The bishop who defended the faith

Nicholas later became the Bishop of Myra. He was gentle to the poor, but bold when defending the truth.

During the Council of Nicaea (325 AD), he stood against the false teachings that denied Jesus' full divinity. Many Catholics never know this, Santa Claus was at Nicaea defending the Creed. The same man who gave gifts to children also protected the Church

with courage.

Miracles, mercy, and a heart like christ

Stories of Nicholas' miracles spread everywhere:

- · saving sailors during storms,
- · rescuing kidnapped children,
- · defending innocent people from execution,
- · feeding a starving town during famine.

People saw in him the compassion of Jesus Himself. His charity was not a legend. It was his lifestyle.

How 'Saint Nicholas' became 'Santa

As the centuries passed, his story was told across Europe. In Germany, he was called Sankt Nikolaus, in Holland, Sinterklaas, when Dutch settlers went to America, the name became Santa Claus.

The red suit came later. The beard grew longer. The sleigh, the reindeer, the North Pole, all added by culture. But behind all these decorations is a real man, a bishop, a saint, a defender of the poor, a lover of Jesus Christ.

What the world forgot

Today, Santa Claus is everywhere. But the world often hides the truth. The original Santa is a Catholic saint, St. Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra.

His life teaches us were charity without noise, kindness without reward, faith without fear and love without limits.

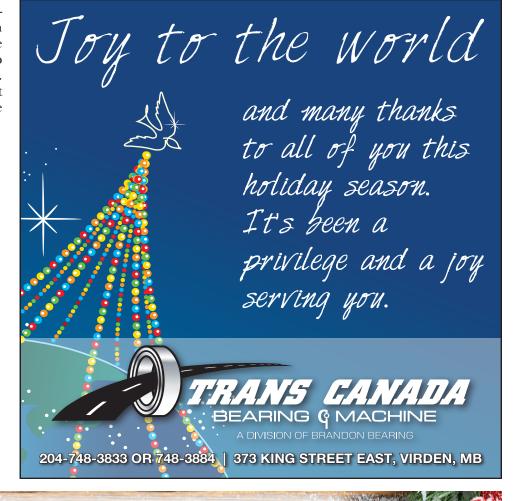
He is not just a figure for children. He is a model for every Christian.

So, the next time you see Santa Claus, remember this, It began with a boy who cared for the poor. It grewwith a bishop who defended the truth. It continues with a saint whose love changed the



world. Santa Claus did not start in the North Pole. He started in the heart of a man who knew Jesus. And his message remains, "Where there is a need, be a gift."







Merry Christmas

Sending you a heartfelt thank you for your business and wishing you the happiest of holidays

Walter, Doug & Linda, Michael & Brittany, Quinton, and Families

Lions Park glows with Christmas Light Village





PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON





By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virden Lions Park Campground was transformed into a Christmas

Light Village for four evenings, from Dec. 10-13.

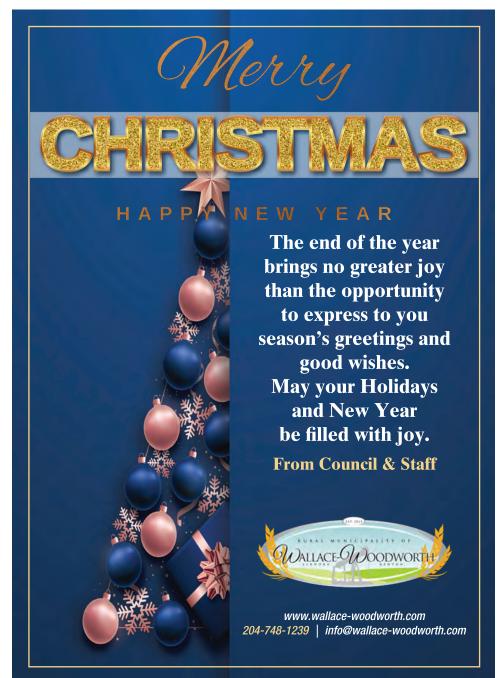
Admission was by donation to each of four groups who donned smiles, directed traffic and took donations. Just over \$2,700 was collected between these non-profits:

Club West, Association of Community Living, Funshine Early Learning Centre and Scouts Canada.

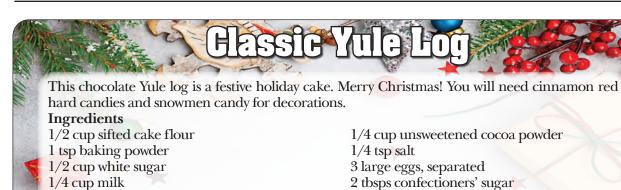
The show was open for three evening hours and at the entry to the tour was The LION, with lights. Viewers got to enjoy the creative displays on a drive around the campground from the comfort of their vehicle.

Glowing among the massive trees,14 light displays by

local organizations and businesses. Light Village Participants were: Virden Lions, Four Seasons, Oxford Assembly, Strike Welding, Sunrise Credit Union, Super Thrifty, Town of Virden, The LITA's (Lady's Motorcycle Group) Valleyview Co-op, Virden Ag & Parts, Virden Footwear, Sports & Fashion, Virden Recreation and Watersports, Westman Communications, and Wolverine Supplies.







8 (1-oz) squares semisweet chocolate

2 tbsps confectioners' sugar

8 oz marzipan

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease a 15x10-inch jelly roll pan. Line with parchment paper. Grease paper.

Sift together flour, cocoa, baking powder, and salt.

1-1/2 cups prepared whipped cream Ganache Frosting and Decoration:

2 cups heavy whipping cream

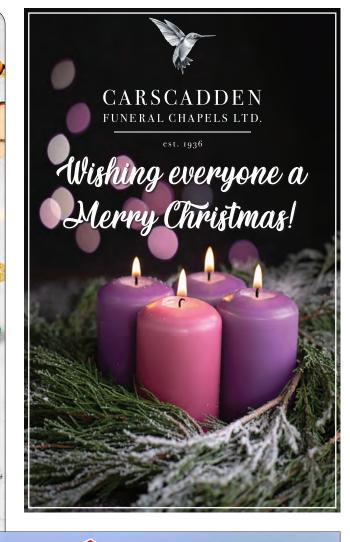
1/2 tsp green food coloring

1/4 cup butter, softened

Beat egg whites at high speed until stiff, but not dry, peaks form. Set aside.

In a separate bowl, beat together sugar and egg yolks at high speed until light and fluffy. At low speed, alternately beat milk and flour mixture into egg mixture. Using a rubber spatula, fold 1/3 of beaten egg whites into batter. Fold in remaining egg whites. Evenly spread batter in prepared pan.

Bake cake in the preheated oven until set and the cake springs back when lightly touched, about 12 mins.







Wishing you and yours a happy & healthy Holiday Season



mach/Ricotta Puff Past

Puff pastry pinwheels are a great appetizer for any occasion and during the Christmasseason, Iarrange them to form a spinach Christmas tree.

Ingredients

1 tsp vegetable oil 2 diced red onions 8 cups fresh spinach salt & pepper

9 oz fresh ricotta cheese 1 pinch nutmeg

1 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese

1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed

1 egg, beaten

4 multi-colored cherry tomatoes, halved

Directions

1. Heatoilin a large pan over medium heat and saute onions until soft and translucent. Add spinach, salt, and pepper and briefly saute while stirring constantly, 2 to 3 mins. Cover and cook until spinach is wilted, 5 to 7 mins. Remove lid after 5 mins and allow cooking liquid to evaporate. Remove from stove and cool completely.

2. Chop spinach mixture and combine with ricotta and Parmesan cheese in a bowl. Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg.

3. Roll out puff pastry sheet and evenly cover with spinach and cheese mixture to within 1/2 inch of the edges. Tightly roll up sheet lengthwise and press edges tightly together. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hrs.

4. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F Cover a baking sheet with parchment paper.

5. Slice pastry log into 3/4-inch slices so you have 16 to 22 pinwheels. Lay puff pastry pinwheels in the shape of a Christmas tree. Brush with egg.

6. Bake in the preheated oven until wheels are lightly browned and puffed up, 20 to 25 mins. Decorate with cherry tomatoes for Christmas tree ornaments.



2025 HOLIDAY HOURS

December 24 8:00 - 12:00 | December 25 - 26 Closed December 31 8:00 - 12:00 | January 1 - 2 Closed

Virden Ag & Parts 560 Commonwealth Drive

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Reston School celebrates with a banquet, evening concert



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Reston School Advisory Council is ready with the Christmas Banquet 2025.

By Anne Davison EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Reston K-Gr. 12 School celebrates Christmas with door décor and on Dec. 16, there's a Christmas Banquet – turkey and all the fixin's – cooked and served by

Reston Parent Advisory Council. Older students are often invited to help out at this noon meal provided for students and staff on Tuesday. All 206 students will enjoy the meal in separate sittings, butit's back to class after that.

Tuesday evening, the Christmas Concert involves each classroom in the school. Parents and community members will be treated to a Gr. 7-12 choir and the High School Drama Club has a presentation as well.

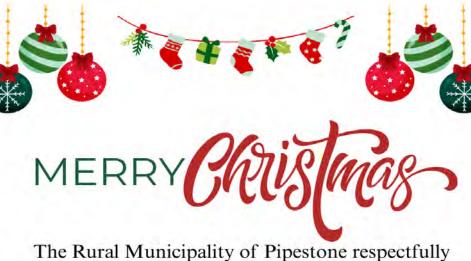




The school held a door decorating contest and here are the winners: 1st place - Grade 11 (gingerbread house) and in 2nd place - Grade 4 (Starbucks).







offers warm holiday greetings to everyone.

May this season bring joy, peace, and time to relax with those you care about.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season and a bright, healthy New Year.

-The RM of Pipestone Council and Staff











MAY YOUR DAYS BE

Merry & Bright

THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON AND THROUGHOUT THE NEW YEAR

Greg Nesbitt

Member of the Legislative Assembly Riding Mountain Constituency

Constituency Office: #7 – 515 – 4th Avenue P.O. Box 100 Shoal Lake, MB ROJ 1Z0 Phone (204) 759-3313 Toll Free 1-844-877-7767 E-mail gregnesbittmla@mymts.net



WISHING YOU A
WARM AND BRIGHT
HOLIDAY SEASON



Creative Snowman Challenge

Submitted

By Krista Pederson

Simple or intricate, traditional or with a modern twist, there are so many ways to show your creativity!

The Very Virden Christmas snowman contest invited you to use your creativity, imagination, and skills, to create the "coolest snowman".

Now, some of us prefer a warmer activity, and have put our talents to work at the sewing machine, or desk with paper, scissors and glue!

You can also download colouring pages from the computer for a fun activity to do by yourself, or to share with family or friends of any age!

Now, if you missed the contest, I encourage you to find a way to use your creativity, and share it with a friend.

If you need ideas or suggestions, or a friend to work with, there are places you can reach out to:

Arts Mosaic has a welcoming space to come



Quilted placemat background created by a volunteer quilter, colouring pages downloaded from the internet, stockings with appliqued snowmen by Krista Pederson.

and enjoy the art gallery, and do something creative in their art room.

SAIL does many differ-

ent events, some creative. Check out our Facebook page, Seniors Access to Independent Living..



An unbelievable rich twist on au gratin potatoes, this casserole develops a caramelized, cheesy, roasted-garlic crust as it bakes.

Ingredients

3 pounds red potatoes, peeled and sliced

6 ounces Gouda cheese, shredded, divided

3 tablespoons butter

5 cloves garlic, minced

1-1/2 cups heavy cream

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Directions

- 1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Lightly grease a 9x13 inch baking dish.
- In the prepared dish layer 1/2 of the potatoes, 1/2 of the cheese, then the remaining potatoes.
- Melt the butter in a small skillet over medium heat. Saute garlic until fragrant and golden brown; pour over potatoes.
- Combine cream, salt and pepper; pour evenly over potatoes and sprinkle with remaining cheese.
- 5. Bake in preheated oven for 75 minutes. Serve immediately.







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Letters To Santa

From the students of Reston School

Dear Santa,

I would like a PS5.

- Eddie

Dear Santa,

I would like a Squishmallow pillow.

- Jade

Dear Santa,

I would like a make-up pallet.

- Elizabeth

Dear Santa,

I would like a video tape of Neil Armstrong on the moon.

- Glen

Dear Santa,

I would like a big Barbie.

- Peyton

Dear Santa,

I would like a kitten.

- Alexandra

Dear Santa,

I would like a Stanley cup.

- Price

Dear Santa,

I would like a Kinder Egg that has a toy inside.

- Emerson

Dear Santa,

I would like a doll.

- Rylee

Dear Santa,

I would like a Nerf gun.

- Leon

Dear Santa,

I would like barbie dolls.



TAKE A HOLI-BREAK AT BP AND TRY OUR NEW HOLIDAY MENU!

Celebrate the season with Boston
Pizza as your go-to holiday
hideaway! Gather with family and
friends over our festively delicious
Holiday Menu, featuring indulgent
dishes, delightful desserts, and
signature drinks crafted to add cheer
to every moment. From casual gettogethers to planned celebrations,
we make it easy to host and toast
without the hassle. So, take a holibreak, pull up a seat, and savour
the flavours that make this season
special!

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING!

Get a FREE \$10 promo card when you purchase a \$50 gift card in restaurant!

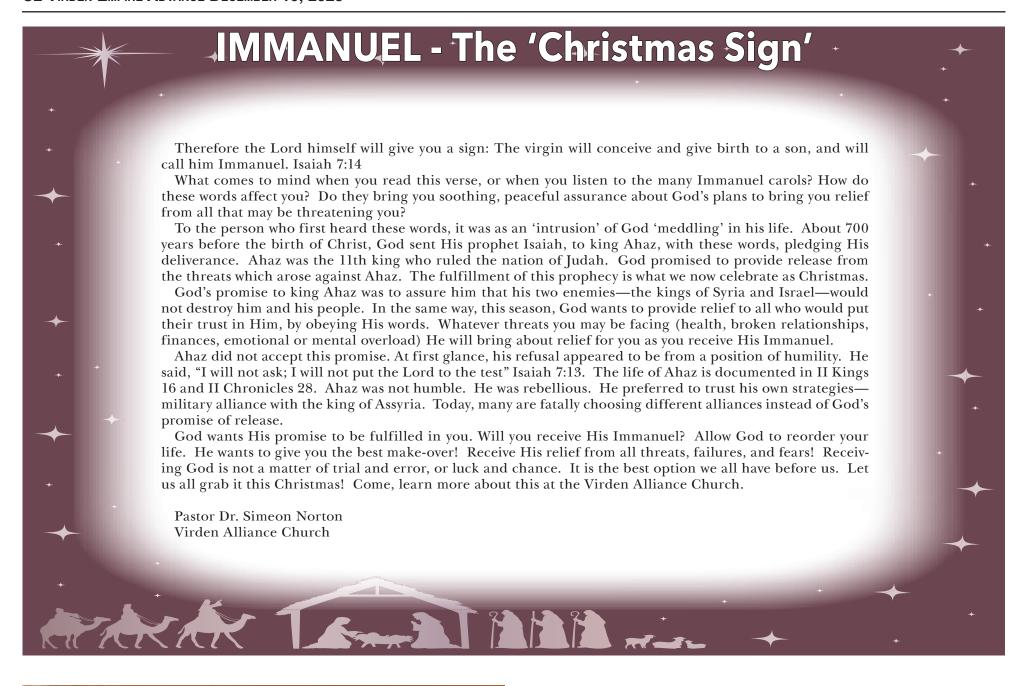
Offer ends December 31. Valid on in-restaurant gift card purchases only.





WISHING YOU A JOYFUL HOLIDAY
SEASON FILLED WITH GOOD FOOD,
GOOD COMPANY AND GREAT
MEMORIES. FROM ALL OF US AT
BOSTON PIZZA VIRDEN, HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!

- * Dec. 24th 11am-7pm
- * Dec. 25th Closed
- * Dec. 26th 4pm-12am
- * Dec. 27th Dec. 30th 11am-12am
- * Dec. 31st 11am -10pm Kids New Year Countdown 6pm
- * Jan 1st 4pm-12am







- Giving the Best Walking Tours of Very Historic Virden in the Summer (Morning, Afternoon, & Evening)!
- Travellers require Sturdy Shoes, Floppy Hat, and a Bottle of Water!
- 2 Hours at Least with 2 Rest Breaks! LET ME LOOK AFTER YOUR RELATIVES FOR TWO HOURS!
- Tutoring available with retired male career educator of 39 years experience in Oak Lake, Virden, and Elkhorn!
- Help with oral reading, creative writing, spelling, handwriting, basic arithmetic, & help with studying plus ... posture,... weight training, and ...calisthenics thrown in.
- Surprising how many teens can't write their own name! Can yours?
- Residence in town.

Available for Tweens and Teens ... payment in Community Service in the Spring, Summer, & Fall of 2026 ... Lunch Provided ... Nothing Wrong with Community Service!

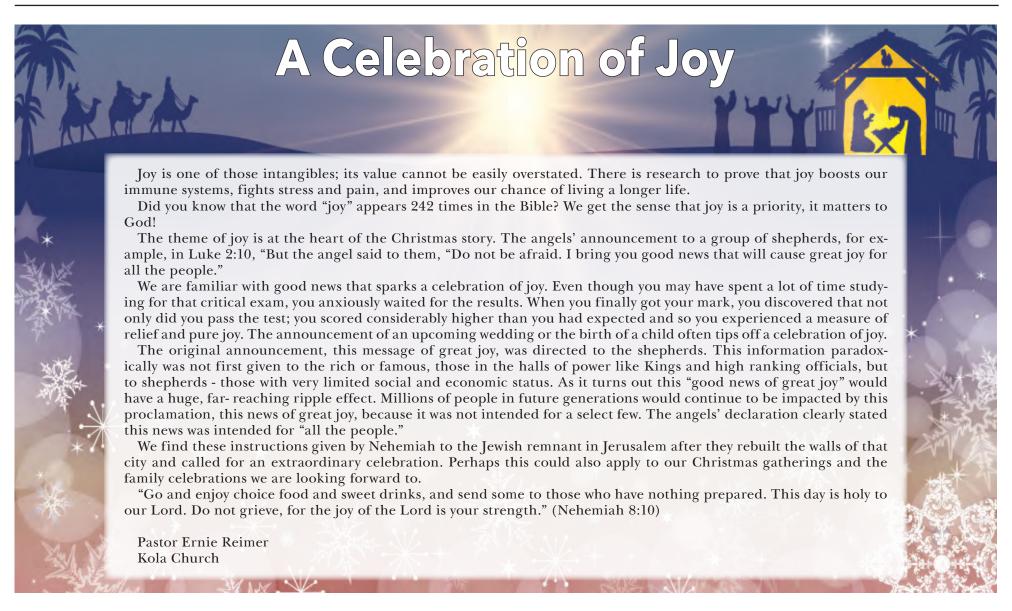
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P.S. ... also a Safe Happy New Year to One and All in 2026!

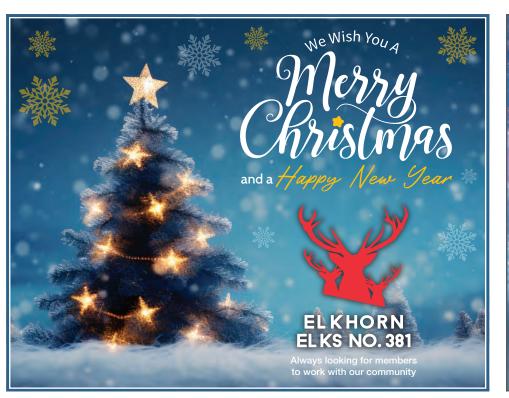








part of our local communities.





Peace and Joy

As we enter another Christmas season two words, "Peace and Joy" seem to stand out in this advent season. Both are included in the message from the angels to the shepherds on that first Christmas night when Jesus was born. The angel proclaimed "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His Peace and Joy is favor rests."

I would like to draw your attention to what the angels proclaimed that night. First of all they proclaimed good news that will bring great joy to "all" people. This is all inclusive, not just the people of that evening that were within earshot, but all of creation from the beginning of time to the end of time as we know it. The message is "good news" that will bring "great joy" for everyone, without exception! The other phrase that the angels proclaimed was "peace on whom His favor rests" This means that the birth of Jesus is bringing that peace to everyone, because again, His favor rests on all people.

The good news that will bring joy and peace to everyone is that God came to earth in the form of a child, who came to the world to reconcile His fallen people, by dying a horrible death on the cross. The Bible says that the wages of sin is death and all people are guilty of sin from the first man, "Adam" to the last man standing alive at the end of the age.

The wages of sin is death.. and then to finish the verse; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

By this sacrifice, His death on the cross, Jesus paid the ultimate price for our sins so that God could be at peace with His creation.

There is one action on our part that we have to do to seal the deal. In order for us to experience that joy and peace, we have to accept the offer that Jesus made.

From Pastor Roy Kroeker Virden Victory Church

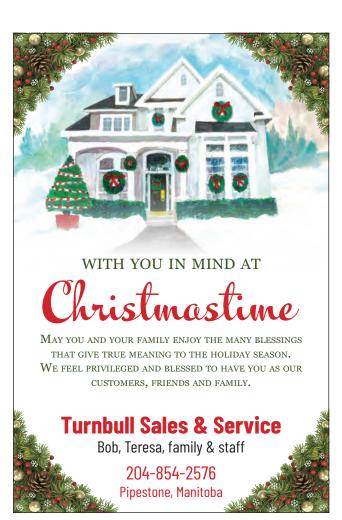








Virden Eyecare Centre
Vor Vavid Cochrane
Vor Julie Paradine
Rhonda, Kenzie, Cheryl & Jodie







Here's hoping your holiday is the complete package, filled with fun and excitement, faith and friendship, love and family, health and happiness... and everything else on your wish list!

We're grateful for all of the fond memories you've given us this past year, and we look forward to seeing you again in 2026.

Thanks for the gifts of your friendship and support!



Christmas through the eyes a child



PHOTO BY KAYCE & LYNN COUNTRYSIDE STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHY

Theodore Fordyce, 1.5 years old from Kenton, MB. Parents, Kendall Prettie and Adam Fordyce.



A brief history of Christmas trees

Towering evergreen trees adorned in lights and other trinkets are a focal point of the holiday season. Christmas trees are placed in prominent locations in homes, typically in front of a large picture window or in the corners of large entryways. These awe-inspiring trees beckon people to inspect all of the ornaments and often are the first thing people envision when thinking of holiday decor. The tradition of the Christmas tree is believed to have begun in Germany in the sixteenth century. However, the National Christmas Tree Association says there may be earlier references to Christmas trees in other parts of the world as well. The first written record of a decorated Christmas tree comes from Riga, Latvia, in 1510. Men of a local merchant's guild decorated the tree with roses and then set fire to it. The rose was considered a symbol of the Virgin Mary. In the sixteenth century in Alsace, France, trees were sold in the marketplace and brought home and set up undecorated. Laws limited the size to "eight shoe lengths" or slightly more than four feet. Early German Christmas trees were adorned with apples, a holdover from earlier traditions when evergreen boughs hung with apples were used as props in miracle plays. These plays took place in churches on December 24, which was Adam & Eve's Day in the early Christian calendar. Evergreens have long been symbolic of life during the cold months of winter, calling to mind the promise of spring to come. Various cultures, including early Christians, featured trees during winter solstice celebrations. Some historians believe Martin Luther, a Protestant reformer who might have been inspired by stars in the night, was responsible for adding lighted candles to the Christmas tree. The Christmas tree was introduced to the United States by German settlers in the 1800s. Soon after those settlers' arrival, trees began

to be sold commercially. President Franklin Pierce is credited with having the first Christmas tree at the White House. Today, Christmas trees are wildly popular, with the American Christmas Tree Association reporting that 94 percent of U.S. consumers plan to display one.









Special and affordable homemade gifts

Submitted By Metro Creative

The holiday season is a joyous time of year, but it also can be expensive. According to the

National Retail Federation, consumers spend an average of \$998 on gifts and additional holiday items each Christmas. In 2024, the anticipated spend for holiday travel, entertainment and gifts was expected to top \$1,600 per shopper.

While some people have no qualms about spending so much come the holiday season, others may be tightening their budgetary belts this year and could be interested in some costeffective gift options. Homemade gifts are very thoughtful, and they tend to be more budget-friendly than some commercially sourced items. Check out these inexpensive homemade gifts.

Bath bombs

Bath bombs are fizzing, scented balls that dissolve in bathwater. Popular retailers sell bath bombs, but such products can be expensive. However, bath bombs are easily made at home with some basic ingredients like baking soda and citric acid. Simply search online for popular bath bomb recipes and then wrap the finished productin cellophane treat bags with ribbon.

Photo ornaments

There are various ways to create photo ornaments, which provide an excellent reason to make prints of some of your favorite images. Insert a print inside of a clear ball ornament, purchase a small photo frame and add a hook for hanging, or use a photo transfer product to transfer photo ink to another object, like a cardboard or wood cutout. Recipients will love hanging these thoughtful photo ornaments on the tree or around the house.

Sugar scrubs

Just like bath bombs, it's relatively easy to recreate a spa experience by gifting homemade sugar scrubs. These scrubs are made from mixing sugar with coconut oil and a few drops of essential oil for a scented boost. If desired, add vitamin E oil or jojoba oil to soothe the skin even more.





OUR BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY

Wherever you travel this season, we hope it finds you surrounded by peace, happiness and loved ones!

We're all geared up for a festive season, and we're excited to be celebrating with our friends and customers here. We never get tired of serving folks like you, and we hope your holiday is merry all the way!

> With Our Thanks, Merry Christmas Danny, Falk, Gerry and James.





Personalized stickers

Many people now have printing and cutting craft machines that enable them to expand their crafting options at home, or even start home businesses. Kids may appreciate a stack of homemade, personalized stickers they can use to adorn water tumblers, phone cases or notebooks.

Homemade gifts are thoughtful and often inexpensive options for creative types shopping on a budget.





Potted plant

flower pot to put a creative and personalized spin on this gift.

A coffee mug with a witty saying can house a plant or even a

small ramekin picked up at the dollar store. Choose a plant

that matches the care style of the recipient. Someone whose

green thumb isn't perfect may appreciate a cactus or another

succulent, which tend to be low-maintenance.

Utilize an interesting container in lieu of a traditional

There's No Place

Like Home for the Holidays

Thanks for making us feel so welcome here, and for trusting us with your business!

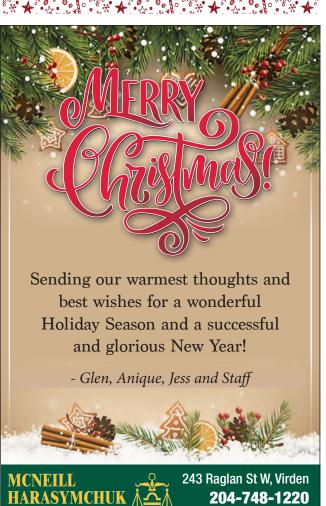
Best wishes, Craig Russell

CENTURY 21. Westman Realty Ltd.











Holiday Greetings from Mayor Williams

As another year draws to a close, we pause and reflect on all we have achieved in the past twelve months, and on the many things we can look forward to in the year ahead.

Council and I are truly grateful for our strong community organizations and partnerships that help Virden continue to grow and thrive, in spite of finding ourselves in new, and sometimes difficult, circumstances.

This year, we have been fortunate to have seen the ongoing revitalization of Victoria Park including the completion of the new washroom building and the first phase of the tennis court resurfacing project to be completed in 2026.

Thanks to the generous support of the Province of Manitoba, an additional \$1.6 million in funding was provided for the completion of upgrades to the Virden Regional Airport R.J (Bob) Andrew Field, which will benefit residents from across the region for generations to come.

The Province reopened Virden's MASC Office in Downtown Virden in September following its closure in 2021, restoring essential in-person services to agricultural producers in our Region. In addition, the Border Regional Library, Virden Branch completed their extensive renovations, bringing new life to our Library for users of all ages.

The Virden Indoor Rodeo celebrated its 35th Anniversary this year, thanks to the ongoing work of so many dedicated volunteers and, after much anticipation, the Wallace District Fire Hall's new Fire Engine was delivered, safeguarding our residents and our facilities long into the future.

2025 has not been without its hardships, particularly as we continue to navigate the challenges surrounding our wells and water supply. Yet, in the midst of these difficulties, Council and I have witnessed remarkable teamwork, determination, and resilience from our staff and community members.

Our staff and contractors have shown commendable problem-solving and initiative, working side by side as we have faced these uncertain times. While the work is not finished, the progress we've made, and the spirit in which it has been made, gives me confidence and optimism for the years ahead.

There is so much to look forward to in Virden, as we move into 2026. The long-awaited improvements to the sound system at Tundra Oil and Gas Place will soon be complete, creating a better experience for spectators, performers, and community users alike. Thanks to the enthusiasm of a dedicated community group, fundraising will soon begin for new pickleball courts which will be available for public use.

Especially at this time of year, we remember how fortunate we are to live here, in our great Province of Manitoba, as we see others around the world, many of whom are much less fortunate than ourselves. Our local spirit and gratitude for those who dedicate their time, talent, and support to the Town of Virden is unmatched. We are so very fortunate to call Virden our home.

On behalf of Council, I would like to wish everyone a happy, safe holiday season and look forward to a healthy and prosperous 2026.

Mayor Tina Williams



The holiday season is now upon us, a wondrous time of celebration, goodwill to our fellow citizens and thoughtful reflections on the year gone by.

With neighbourhoods and businesses aglow with colourful decorations, our province's renowned community spirit is bright, beautiful and further enhanced at this time of year. Manitoba's multiculturalism is also on full display at this time of year, with holiday traditions from around the world joyfully reflected in cuisine, decorations, and seasonal events in all parts of our province.

Our renowned community spirit is further demonstrated through a variety of creative events and charitable endeavours, each helping to ensure that everyone feels the warmth of our welcoming and caring provincial community. I encourage everyone to support the many wonderful organizations dedicated to providing a hand up to Manitobans in need with the same empathy and generosity that has consistently made our province one of the most giving places in Canada.

As the King's representative in Manitoba, I am pleased to extend vice-regal greetings to all citizens for a safe and happy holiday season. May the wonders of this special time inspire us all to demonstrate kindness and compassion to all, not only seasonally, but all year-round. Every good deed is another subtle reminder of how fortunate we are to call this great province 'home.'

The Honourable Anita R. Neville, P.C., O.M. Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba











