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LOOKING after LOCAL

School band horses around The Winter Concert brings unexpected entertainment

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE ADVANCE

There was never a dull moment at the school band concert where Virden Grade 7, Grade 8 and VCI Band performed favourites. Students stepped up to the microphone and introduced their pieces which included Gr. 7's on Hot Cross Buns, Lion Sleeps Tonight and Shine. A dinosaur showed up during the Gr. 8 Jurassic Park Theme Song and horses played horns during the VCI Band's closing number, Sleigh Ride.

Ms. Tyra Zander, band instructor and director, welcomed family and friends who came to hear the students play. She said, "We hope this concert brings a bit of light and cheer to your evening. As we gather in this beautiful space it's a reminder of how music has the unique ability to unite us, lift our spirits and bring people closer together."

And sure enough, throughout the hour-long concert, a humorous undercurrent paired with enthusiastic performances brought raucous cheers from the audience (which included non-performing students).

The teacher introduced Gr. 7 band saying, "In our time together, they have learned echo patterns, songs by ear and reading music." The 53 beginner students practice one to two times per week and will play at Virden Music & Arts Festival in March and in April at the Level 1 Band Festival in Brandon.

With about 20 players, the Gr. 8 band's "Abominable Snowman Chase" characterized "a chase through the towering peaks of the Himalayas in pursuit of this legendary creature" with the percussion section's giant footsteps. They will perform "Syncopated Senorita" at the Winnipeg Concert Band Festival in Winnipeg this February. To fill a gap in the band, Zander introduced a talented Gr. 11 clarinetist Ethan Lao who supported the Gr. 8 band and also performed with the senior band.

Introducing their final number Zander said, "Grade 8s have a special treat for you." Jurassic Park Theme Song featured dinosaur (Brock Frizzley) who roared onstage and proceeded to lumber through The AUD audience before taking an oversized baton to conduct the piece. The song itself sounded delightful.

The VCI Band of 33 students from Gr. 9 to Gr. 12 performed four pieces including Abba's Mamma Mia!, They will perform in The AUD in Virden Music & Arts Festival in



VCI Band horses toot their horns during sleigh ride.



Gr. 8 Band dinosaur conducts Jurassic Park Theme Song.



Gr. 7 Band prepares to play.

PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

March. In May, VCI Band will compete at the Moose Jaw Band Festival. The audience was given a small part in the Christmas Spectacle suite. Sleigh Ride closed the concert with specials from the trumpeting horses.

Due to extreme cold and school cancellation, last week's concert was moved from Monday to Tuesday. You can hear Virden school bands at the upcoming Music and Arts Festival this March 10 and 11 in The AUD.



**HOME GAME
FRIDAY, JANUARY 31
VS. DAUPHIN
KINGS
PUCK DROPS AT 7:30PM**

Inside...



**GOLDEN BEARS,
RENEGADES
BATTLING IN
WESTMAN LEAGUE**

P7



**CORRIDORS
CREATE HUGE
CONTROVERSY**

P3

Town looks to new opportunities for Tundra Oil & Gas Place



FILE PHOTO

Submitted
BY TOWN OF VIRDEN

At the Jan. 14, regular meeting of the Town of Virден, council resolved to have administrative staff explore alternative event and booking opportunities for the dry floor surface at Tundra Oil and Gas Place, as a substitute for the installation of summer ice.

This decision was made after consultation with those user groups who book ice time during the winter months, and an in-depth review of the operational costs and the impact of summer ice on the long-term sustainability of the facility.

Excessive humidity is becoming an increasing problem during the summer months, damaging equipment and fixtures in the facility. The Town had one dehumidifier installed in 2018 as a result of this in hopes of protecting equipment from further damage. Once it was installed, the light fixtures above the ice pad were replaced at a cost of \$70,000, along with other equipment that had sustained damage primarily due to the humidity levels experienced during previous summers. As humidity levels continue to increase each year, an additional unit will be required if ice is kept in the facility much past May 15 of each year. That unit, with additional capacity, will cost between \$100,000 to \$150,000. Summer ice also requires increased run times for the compressors for the ice plant.

Decreasing the run time will increase the life span of the compressors immensely, decreasing overall operational costs, including hydro required to operate them. Cooling and humidity levels in the rest of the facility, including the banquet hall, will be easier to maintain, without the added load on the plant.

In previous years, when there was a key tenant during the summer, the guaranteed revenue along with revenue generated from additional bookings, helped to offset the additional operational costs experienced with the installation of summer ice. Without a key tenant booking a guaranteed number of hours, the number of hours booked has been decreasing each year, creating a larger deficit.

Communities across the province are welcoming other sporting and entertainment events to their facilities during the offseason. Lacrosse, roller skating, roller hockey, mini golf, indoor equine, and other agricultural related events, tradeshows, concerts, the list of opportunities is endless. The Town's Events and Programming Coordinator has been actively researching new opportunities for use of the dry floor space, that will bring in new attractions and spinoffs to the retail and accommodation sector in our community.

If you have any information on any event that the Town could host, please contact Tara Davies Events and Programming Coordinator at 204-748-2440.



Preliminary 2024 Census Canada figures show ups and downs

By Ken Waddell
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The chart below shows the change in population for towns and municipalities in the Virден Empire-Advance coverage area. Some numbers are up and unfortunately some numbers are down.

VIRDEN						
CSD ID	Geography	2001	2009	2016	2021	2024
	Canada	31,020,855	33,630,069	36,110,803	38,239,864	41,288,599
	Manitoba	1,151,451	1,208,555	1,314,140	1,391,924	1,494,301
4606034	Virден (T), Manitoba	3,182	3,066	3,376	3,308	3,353
4606016	Sifton (RM), Manitoba	1,150	1,112	1,268	1,264	1,281
4606023	Pipestone (RM), Manitoba	1,583	1,438	1,473	1,454	1,553
4606031	Wallace-Woodworth (RM), Manitoba	3,007	2,905	2,989	2,985	2,870
4607057	Whitehead (RM), Manitoba	1,483	1,474	1,691	1,725	1,831
4611040	Winnipeg (CY), Manitoba	638,312	664,744	727,345	772,330	843,640
4615032	Oakview (RM), Manitoba	1,786	1,530	1,660	1,667	1,701
4615056	Prairie View (MU), Manitoba	2,470	2,183	2,124	2,212	2,223

And now about the differences in numbers.

Just a note for keen eyed observers that the 2021 stats stated may be different than what was stated in 2021. However, the "official" population in each year includes an adjustment for the census undercount.

Stats Canada says, "During / after each census, "To determine how many individuals were missed or counted more than once, Statistics Canada conducts postcensal coverage studies of a representative sample of individuals. Results of these studies in combination with the census counts are used to produce population estimates which take into account net under coverage."

This is a very important exercise at the national level and at the provincial level as these "official" population estimates are used for federal transfers to provinces that pay \$XX per capita to each province.

Letter to the Editor

RE: Lets just cut out the crap ~
Jan 24, 2025

I agree with your column "Lets just cut out the crap" (January 24th paper) and just to add a bit of substance, I have clipped articles of crimes from the Winnipeg newspaper over the last year or so and almost every crime was committed by someone who is either 'out on parole', 'Free on bail', 'Statutory release', 'Conditional discharge', 'Failing to comply with a probation order', 'Failing to comply with conditions of a release order and the latest, 'Failing to comply with conditions of an undertaking'. 'Released on an appearance notice'.

Talk about crap!

This "catch & release" justice system we have in this country is pathetic at best and it just goes on & on and nobody seems to care or do anything about it.

Rick Sparling
Winnipeg

Letter to the Editor

RE: Lets just cut out the crap ~
Jan 24, 2025

Great column Ken in the January 24 paper.

Yes, there needs to be changes made.

Travelling in the USA, we saw many inmates picking garbage along freeways. Lord knows there are areas in Manitoba that need cleaning up.

Prison farms could serve a great service providing food to organizations serving the homeless.

Parks Manitoba charges for firewood in most campgrounds. We have acres of woodlands that could be harvested for this rather than being wood from bush operators. Or provide free wood as part of the campground fee as it was for years.

Many opportunities exist but first society must realize these people have been incarcerated for a reason and their rights, and feelings should not be a priority.

Wow I better quit!

Norm Bruce
Minitonas, MB

Corridors create huge controversy

By Ken Waddell
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Nothing brings out a crowd like controversy and the public meeting held at Erickson on January 15 had both a crowd and controversy.

It would appear that about 300 people, mostly farmers and hunters came together to discuss a wide range of topics. Several speakers presented their views on the concept of Ecological Corridors and on hunting rights. As the meeting wore on, it appeared there were too many topics and too many speakers to gain a consensus. The meeting lasted close to three hours.

The meeting was so diverse, intense and jumbled in topics that it's hard to summarize.

Rob Olson of the Manitoba Wildlife Federation (MWF) was the lead-off speaker and presented pages and pages of details about wildlife management and the decision by the Province of Manitoba to limit moose hunting opportunities in parts of Manitoba.

Dennis Schindler, also of the MWF talked about the possibility of the establishment of an Ecological Corridor in the Assiniboine West Watershed District. AWWD did file an application and were awarded almost \$1 million towards conservation programs.

The Ecological Corridor is a program administered by Parks Canada but isn't limited to the boundaries of National parks. Schindler previously wrote an extensive opinion piece on a number of wildlife topics, including Ecological Corridors. That piece was published in the Rivers Banner, the Neepawa Banner & Press and a number of other papers. Schindler expressed concerns that the corridor concept would be mated up with an Indigenous Protected Conservation Area (IPCA). He also wrote that these two programs are part of the federal government's commitment to 30x30, preserving 30 per cent of Canada's land into protected areas by 2030.

After hearing the main speakers and many others, the meeting seemed to shift toward asking that the AWWD withdraw their application. AWWD manager Ryan Canart addressed the meeting by saying this funding application was like many others over the past decades where the AWWD "would make an application for funding, design a program and then market it to landowners." He emphasized that AWWD programs are voluntary.

In a press release from AWWD, Canart said. "Thank you to all that supported the ecological corridor project, however, "Due to extreme opposition, the board of the Assiniboine West Watershed District has decided to decline the project titled "From Mountain to River, Riding Mountain National Park to the Assiniboine River via the Little Saskatchewan River Ecological Corridor Project."

In article released last week, Olson said "the Assiniboine West Watershed District has made the decision not to sign a contribution agreement with Parks Canada for a \$1 million grant to deliver programming within the federal government's Ecological Corridor program framework. This ends a months-long, divisive battle between a rapidly expanding group of local agricultural producers, known as the Manitoba Land Stewards Inc. (MLS), and the Assiniboine West Watershed District (AWWD)."

Not everyone agrees with the decision to withdraw

There are some who disagree, including former Rivers Heights MLA Jon Gerrard in a letter to the editor printed below. Also Rey Frey of Crawford Park wrote to the Municipality of Harrison Park, "I was amazed to see council formally withdraw and oppose support for the Little Saskatchewan River Ecological Corridor Project."

Join Gerrard's letter was submitted as follows:

Inaccuracy results in loss of \$1M investment in ecological corridor project

While the Manitoba Wildlife Federation commitment to conservation and biodiversity programming in Manitoba should be applauded, sadly, the article by Denis Schindler on the Little Saskatchewan River ecological corridor project has provided inaccurate information. This inaccuracy is now resulting in the AWWD withdrawing from the project and the loss of a \$1 million investment

for Manitoba. The article raised concerns about a link between Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) and the ecological corridor project. Put simply, this project is being led by the Assiniboine West Watershed District (AWWD), an environmental non-profit organization that is not Indigenous, rendering the potential for this to be an Indigenous-led project impossible. There are some corridor initiatives being led in Canada by Indigenous organizations, but there are also many, as is this case, that are being led by non-Indigenous organizations. There is no requirement for an ecological corridor to be Indigenous-led or to become an IPCA, and it is not AWWD's mandate or intention to create an IPCA

While the AWWD project would have enhanced conservation, there was no mandate or objective for ecological corridors to increase federally or provincially protected areas. Ecological corridors are not intended to contribute to the Government of Canada's target to conserve and protect 30 per cent of lands in Canada by 2030. Corridors are a "complementary" conservation approach to protected areas but are not protected areas themselves. They link protected areas to facilitate the movement of species across landscapes, helping them get to and from protected areas. Corridors can host a variety of land use activities ranging from farming, forestry, hunting, and more.

The AWWD project was about protecting, enhancing and improving ecological connectivity through voluntary incentive-based agreements with private landowners. Other conservation programs are already in use and widely accepted. The AWWD ecological corridor project would have included support for tree planting efforts and for regenerative agricultural practices. Denis Schindler raises concerns about Crown Land. Decisions about Crown Land fall under provincial responsibility and changes to them were not part of the project's objective, or the mandate of the AWWD. There were no plans in the Little Saskatchewan River project to transfer any Crown Land from provincial to federal jurisdiction.

The AWWD has no regulatory power and would not introduce new rules or regulations, nor, in the context of this one-year project, would there have been any land expropriation. Rules and regulations are the responsibility of municipalities for lands in municipalities, First Nation communities for First Nation lands, the province and the federal government. Municipal sovereignty in terms of municipal decision making would not have been altered. Further, the AWWD does not change rules related to hunting, angling, or trapping, or for agricultural use, cottage leases, snowmobiling or hiking. All parts of the AWWD ecological corridor project were optional for individual landowners. None were mandatory.

The project planned collaboration with Assiniboine Community College and Brandon University to enable more to be learned about the Little Saskatchewan River and its biodiversity. The project also included making all data produced during its one-year duration publicly available in an archive within the watershed. Work done would have been fully and transparently available.

The project would have fostered collaboration among municipalities and First Nations communities. Elvin Huntinghawk, an elder in Rolling River First Nation, has talked about the difficulties in the past of communities working together. It is time for a healthy collaboration between and among jurisdictions. Such a collaboration can help avoid misunderstandings and build better relationships.



PHOTO FROM SOUTHWESTERN MANITOBA RIVER JOURNEYS WEBSITE

The Little Saskatchewan River winds its way southward from Riding Mountain National Park and empties into the Assiniboine about 15 km. west of Brandon near the Grand Valley campsite. It passes through Minnedosa, Rapid City, and Rivers. As it approaches the Assiniboine Valley it begins a rather sharp descent.

The need for ecological corridors is well recognized. Conservation of wildlife habitat is important whether you enjoy walking or boating in nature, bird watching, hunting or the many other outdoor activities. It is vitally important that this be done under the leadership and decision making of a local organization which can listen to and work with all along the corridor.

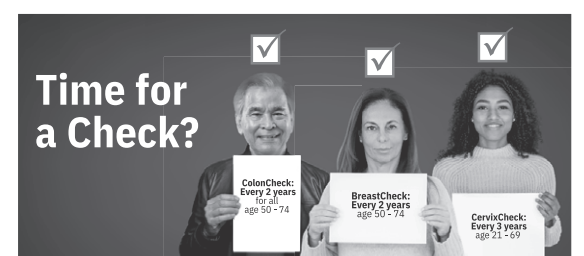
The one-year ecological corridor project would have been led by AWWD in cooperation with others — it was not to be led by Parks Canada.

The AWWD has a long history of working for the benefit of all, especially for farmers, through optional programs which offer opportunities. Those involved in agriculture are critical to our future as a province. The AWWD worked for representation from across the watershed on the steering committee for the corridor. The contributions and the integrity of the AWWD need to be respected. The horrific flood of 2022 and its impact on the town of Minnedosa are an example of why this initiative is critically important. It is to be hoped that people like Denis Schindler will come to realize the important contributions the one-year AWWD project could have made.

Jon Gerrard, former MLA River Heights.

Editor's note: The above article and comments are but a fraction of the material that has been written and spoken on this topic. We must remember that the last time United Nations levels of concern and intervention was imposed upon Manitoba's environmental policies, it cost Manitoba Hydro a few billion dollars to move Bi-Pole III to the western side of Manitoba. If you wish to submit a letter to the editor about the Ecological Corridors, please email it to me at kwaddell@neepawabanner.com

Border Regional Library
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Has been rescheduled:
Wednesday, February 5
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Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



The pendulum swings...

As one ages we notice that the old becomes new. I'm old enough to have met wide leg jeans and bell bottom trousers three times! What has caught my attention is the tiny house movement. Possibly because now that I have cancelled television and rely on my smart TV for entertainment that is one of the free channels... The program is interesting and I firmly believe there is a need and a place for tiny homes.

Reflecting on the movement, the words of Malvina Reynolds, sung by Pete Seeger and hitting the top of the charts in 1963- "Little boxes, all the same..." They were both aware of the conformity and consumerism of the times and voiced their opinion. What does strike me that the tiny boxes they referred to were not all that tiny: basic single- family bungalows that all looked just the same. Like the houses in many a Canadian city built to provide homes after the second world war. In comparison to new builds today they were tiny house. In comparison to the settlers homes at the turn of the century, they were palatial.

A true tiny house would be a log cabin, chinked with mud and manure, some as small as twelve by twenty that provided a home for an entire growing family. For those that didn't have access to trees, they built a Semlin, a sub terrarium sod hut. For those, one dug down several feet, using the sod to build up the walls. They varied in size, most commonly fifteen by thirty- five with about fifteen square feet reserved for the livestock! Sod roof that dripped when it rained, perhaps a waxed paper window and a growing family. Now that's a tiny house! Remember that both the Mennonites and the Ukrainians, the ones most likely to live in a sunken sod home had large families.

The move today to a tiny home includes indoor plumbing, often a washer/dryer unit, fridge and stove. The units are clean, have windows, private or at least semi private sleeping quarters. I am certainly not ready to live in a tiny house. When I moved from the acreage to town I referred to my current home as a small house, it's not. Some of the floor plans for what is termed a tiny house compare to the three bedroom bungalows that farm families embraced as modern, spacious, convenient homes. And they are small in comparison to many of the new builds.

Part of this trend now includes the term granny pod: a small, self-contained unit on the big yard. I'm old enough to remember those too! A small, tiny, house where an aunt or uncle or grandparent could live with a degree of independence. Meals could be shared with family, as could some child care. That was before we had the convenience of 'old folks homes' or long term care facilities. Grandparents and grandchildren truly knew each other, the elder accepting the help of the youngster, and the youngster reaching out for comfort and cookies when home got hectic.

The pendulum swings, that which was old is new. There are a few other 'old' habits and customs I would love to see return!

Wisdom and comfort

The Bible clearly states we are to pray for our governments at all levels. We have several layers or levels in Canada, school boards, municipal, provincial and federal governments.

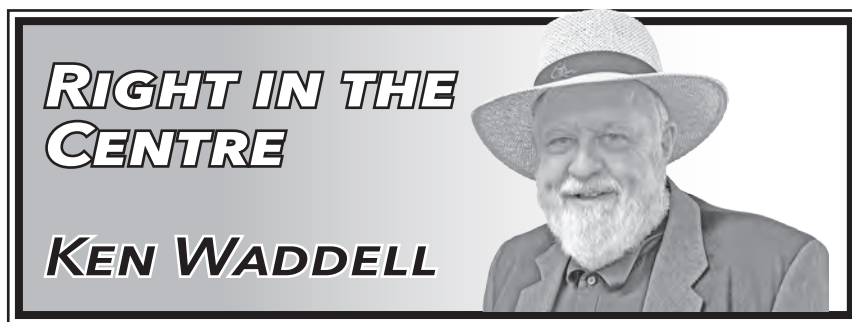
"13 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves." Romans 13:1-2

2 I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 1 Timothy:2-1-2

The above Bible verses are simple enough and straight forward. We are instructed that God establishes our governments and that we are to pray for them. What if we don't like our government? The verses still apply. But what about evil governments like Nazi Germany. I am sure many millions of people prayed through those horrific times and we can be thankful that as bad as things are now, we aren't suffering from the effects of the Nazis.

That said, if ever our generation needed to pray for our government, it's now.

I think we are in for tumultuous times. With the bombardment of information we endure in this age, we know instantly when things happen, be they good or bad. I doubt that any era that people have known more instant information than we do today. If a butterfly flaps its wings in



“ We are instructed that God establishes our governments and that we are to pray for them. What if we don't like our government? The verses still apply. ”

Thailand, we can be told about it instantly, in full colour and with sound.

The internet has been harnessed by news media companies, by internet influencers and by political movements to mould us into their image. But we are not created in their image, we are created in God's image and that is the image that we must imagine, the image we need to pursue.

The United States has just gone through a transformational election. The previous government, the Democrats had taken the country in a direction that has been solidly rejected by the voters.

Canada is about to go through what may be a transformational election. The current government, the Liberals have taken the country in a direction that may be solidly rejected by the voters. Polling would indicate that to be the case.

We need to pray for Canada and the United States.

Prayer will do many things but two come to mind. One, prayer reaches out to God to extend His mercy and wisdom to governments. Two, prayer gives us comfort when it seems that the world and our world is crumbling.

In the coming months, may our governments deal wisely and decisively with the issues of the day. In both Canada and the United States there has been a lack of wisdom and correct decisions for a number of years. Change is coming at us like a tidal wave, may God bring mercy and wisdom to governments and comfort to us all.

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

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Man discovered in Oak Lake with stolen property

Westman RCMP report for Jan. 19 to Jan. 25

Submitted
BY WESTMAN RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 49 calls for service. Of the 49, 10 were traffic related including 3 operation while impaired files. Also included in the calls for service were 2 assault files, 2 wellbeing files, 2 failing to comply with court orders and disobeying the court, 2 disturbing the peace files, 3 thefts and 4 false alarms.

On Jan. 21 Westman RCMP were dispatched to the RM of Sifton where a vehicle was in the ditch with an occupant inside. A 23-year old male was identified as the lone occupant and driver, he was arrested and charged with operation while impaired (alcohol) of motor vehicle and operation while over 80mg% (alcohol) of motor vehicle. A breath test was conducted with results of 190mg% and 180mg%. He will appear in court in March for this charge, his licence was suspended for 90 days and the vehicle impounded for 30 days.

On Jan. 21 Westman RCMP received a dispatch of a crash notification. Members attended the scene in the RM Wallace-Woodworth along with EMS and Fire. The driver and three passengers were assessed by EMS and treated on scene. The driver was an 18-year-old male. He was arrested and charged with impaired driving while over 80mg% (alcohol) of motor vehicle. A breath test was conducted with results of 90mg% and 80mg%. He will appear in court in March for this charge, his licence was suspended for 90 days and the vehicle impounded for 60 days.

On Jan. 21 Westman RCMP received a call through dispatch of an attempt or threat of suicide in the community of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. Members attended the residence along with Manitoba First Nations Safety Officers where a 28-year-old female came to the window and would not allow anyone

inside the home, but appeared to be okay. Members and FNSO's left the residence as to not elevate the situation and to wait for Dakota Tiwahe Services to be able to be present to enter the home to check on the well being of the children. Members returned to the residence with Dakota Tiwahe Services and at this time the 28-year-old woman utilized her dog to attack members as they entered the residence. The children were safely apprehended and the 28-year-old was placed under arrest and will attend court in March on two charges of assault on other peace/public officer with a weapon/causing bodily harm and two charges of resisting /obstructing a peace officer.

On Jan. 25 Westman RCMP were on a routine patrol in Oak Lake, when members located a truck stuck in the snow with a trailer behind the vehicle. A lone occupant of the vehicle was asleep in the drivers' seat. He was identified and is known to police, the vehicle and trailer plates were run through the police system and he was not the registered owner of the trailer. The 42-year-old man was also on conditions not to possess weapons, however a double-edged knife and a shortened club were located. He was placed under arrest and transported to the Virden detachment where he was remanded into custody. The man is to appear in court this month on charges of theft over \$5000, possession of property obtained by crime over \$5000, and two charges of failing to comply with release order conditions.

To report a complaint or non-emergent incident to RCMP please call 204-748-2135. For general inquires 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. The tip line is not traceable and does not subscribe to caller ID or call display.



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Jessica at virdenempireadvance@outlook.com
Diane at ads@neepawabanner.com

Miniota News

Submitted
BY LINDA CLARK

The Miniota United Church Women held their annual meeting on January 21st at the church. All the annual reports were accepted. Catering prices and the budget were set for 2025. Two fundraisers dates were established with April 27th for a roast beef supper and October 19th for the turkey supper. The executive for

2025 is as follows: Chairperson Linda Clark, Vice Margaret Still, Secretary Beth Lelond, and Treasurer Kerrie Williams. Representatives were appointed to plan World Day of Prayer for March 7th with the Miniota ACW.

A busy time for the rink as the U11 Provincial Playoffs were held at the Miniota Community Centre this past weekend with teams participating from Rivers, Hamiota,

Birtle, Tri Valley, Shoal Lake, and Miniota. Placing for Provincials were Shoal Lake for Division 'B' and Rivers for Division 'C'. Our local Miniota players finished third in the 'C' Division. Congratulations to all the players and coaches!

"Your purpose isn't to gain the approval of the world, but to be a light in it." -Author Unknown



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MLA for Riding Mountain

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Miniota Golf Club

Join Our Team

Miniota Golf Club is accepting application for the following positions for the 2025 Golf Season

- Greenkeeper
- Greenkeeper Assistant
- Clubhouse Manager
- Clubhouse Assistants

Applications close March 31, 2025

Applications to be sent to
Miniota Golf Club
Applications
Box 291
Miniota, MB ROM 1M0
or norjst@gmail.com

Contact for more information
204 748-5567 or norjst@gmail.com

HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

Puffed wheat

Some prairie wheat history: In 1928 the price of wheat was \$1.03 and by 1932 it was worth 29 cents a bushel and would go down over the next few years. Over 70% of Canadian wheat was exported to other countries that put taxes on the wheat making it expensive. As the Depression progressed over the world the wheat prices dropped further and Canada held back its wheat and waited for the prices to improve. Unfortunately, the prices didn't improve for a number of years leaving Canada with a huge supply of wheat and no one to buy it.

The year was 1933. Sam Yeske a new immigrant to Canada was running the grain separator for a farmer. As he worked he tried to come up with other ways to empty the farmers' loaded granaries. At home he experimented with heating the wheat under pressure to puff it. After time, a few blown out windows, and some investors he built a puffed wheat plant in Edmonton. The plant was soon selling a train car load of puffed wheat a day across the prairies. A wonderful success story for the dirty 30s. Puffed wheat production soon became a major industry on the Prairies in the 1930s to the 1960s. In Manitoba, I understand Portage la Prairie had a plant and Winnipeg had the Prairie Maid Company which was closed in 2013.

Now, the idea of eating puffed grains did not originate on the Canadian prairies. On December 1901, botanist Alexander Pierce Anderson of Minnesota created puffed rice. By 1905 Quaker Oats sold their product as a breakfast cereal called Puffed Rice. In 1907, Quaker added Puffed Wheat to their line of readymade cereals. The demand for puffed wheat was higher in Western Canada than other parts of the country as the wheat growing provinces needed to make use of the abundance of prairie grain.

Did you know that puffed wheat cake originated in the Prairie Provinces and is not well known in other parts of the country?

In 1913, Maritimer Alfred Russell settled in Red Deer and opened a candy store making fudge, fondants, toffees, an all-day sucker and more. We have Alfred Russell, a self-professed "maker of good candy," to thank for the sweet and sticky treat we know as puffed wheat cake.

With the start of World War I in 1914, Canadians needed to find substitutes to using wheat in their everyday use. With a large majority of Canadian wheat crops shipped to troops overseas, many bakers and confectioneries were left with a limited use of wheat to make their goods. Rationing in the war forced Russell to become inventive with his recipes. The use of puffed grains, such as rice and wheat, became increasingly popular because it took less product to make more finished goods. Russell came up with the idea for the puffed wheat square. His version initially used molasses, a common WWI alternative to sugar. His initial bar was more of a molasses brittle with added puffed wheat. According to his family the puffed wheat squares eventually became much softer and gooier than Russell's original recipe.

Puffed wheat cake is a classic, easy treat that always reminds me of my childhood. In a pinch it can be made up quickly to be ready for school lunches the next day. The most important part of making this cake is avoiding over-boiling the chocolate sauce. Boil it for exactly one minute once it hits a rolling boil then remove from heat immediately after! Over boiling can lead to rock hard treats that are tough to eat. If the sauce is under cooked, the squares will be crumbly and not hold together. Fear not, it's not that tricky! For easier removal and cutting of squares, use parchment paper to line your baking sheet.

Fun fact: Puffed Wheat Squares was one of the most commonly searched recipes on Google Canada in 2015.

I customize my puffed wheat cake by adding 1/3 cup of peanut butter, use honey instead of syrup and add chopped peanuts, or leave out the cocoa and add raisins or other dried fruits to the puffed wheat.

Chocolate puffed wheat cake

8 cups puffed wheat cereal

1 cup brown sugar

1/2 cup butter

2/3 cup corn syrup

1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder (or more to taste)

1 tsp. vanilla

Grease a 9X13 inch pan or line your pan with parchment paper. Measure out puffed wheat into a large bowl. Set aside. Combine brown sugar, butter, syrup, and cocoa powder in a heavy-bottomed pot. Over medium heat bring to a boil; cook, stirring constantly, for one minute. Add the vanilla. Pour this mixture over the puffed wheat cereal in the bowl; stir until the cereal is evenly coated. Transfer mixture to prepared baking dish. Press the mixture firmly into the pan to avoid crumbly squares. Refrigerate until set. Cut into squares. Enjoy with your favourite people.

Binaural Beats: My Secret to Staying Chill and Healthy

HOLISTIC WELLNESS

CERTIFIED HYPNOTHERAPIST

MARIE EVELYNE GINGRAS

Let me tell you about a little life hack that has completely changed how I deal with stress, focus, and just feeling good overall: binaural beats. I know it sounds kind of techy and weird but stick with me. It is honestly the easiest, coolest way to give your brain a much-needed break (or boost) without lifting a finger.

Here is how it works. You pop on a pair of headphones or on your speakers, play some binaural beats, and your brain does this super-smart thing where it syncs up to the beats. You do not even have to think about it. Your brain just *gets it*. Depending on the frequency of the beats, you can relax, focus, or even sleep better. I use Spotify and I just type in the search what I want for beats. For example, I'd type in the search bar, "binaural beats for relaxation" or "binaural beats for more energy". You can start with those until you become more familiar with how they work.

I started using binaural beats during crazy busy workdays when my brain felt like it was running on fumes. I would throw on a beta wave track (those are for focus), and suddenly it was like my mind cleared up and everything clicked. No coffee jitters, no brain fog, just a clean, productive vibe.

When stress hits Alpha waves are my go-to. These are like the audio version of a big, warm hug. They calm you down without making you sleepy. I put them on when I feel overwhelmed, and within minutes, it is like someone turned down the volume on my stress. And let me tell you, the delta waves are game

changers for sleep. If you have ever laid in bed at night, staring at the ceiling while your brain replays every awkward thing you have ever done, delta waves are your new best friend.

What I love most is how easy this is to fit into my day. I do not need an hour of meditation or a fancy setup. I just use my headphones and a few minutes. Sometimes I use it on my lunch break to reset or play it in the background while I work. Other days, it is part of my wind-down routine before bed. The

flexibility makes it so doable, even when life gets hectic.

Since I started using binaural beats, I have noticed a real difference in how I feel. My stress does not spiral as much, I am more focused during the day, and I wake up feeling rested. And the best part? It is all natural—no pills, no side effects, just sounds.

So, if you are looking for a way to feel a little more *you*, whether that means less stressed, more focused, or just more in control, give binaural beats a shot. It is like a secret weapon for your mind and body, and trust me, it is worth trying. Pop on those headphones and see what happens! You might just thank yourself later.



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SPORTS

GOLDEN BEARS, RENEGADES BATTLING IN WESTMAN LEAGUE

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Collegiate Institute boys hockey team is having success on the ice this season.

In the always competitive Westman High School Hockey League, the Golden Bears had a 16-10-0 record. According to the stats posted on the site as of Jan. 25, that placed them fifth in the league standings according to points. What has allowed them to be successful?

“Buying into what the coaches are asking them to do. Besides the offensive and defensive side of the puck, working on the ‘little things’ that will help the team be successful and striving to get better,” VCI head coach Doug Roach said.

Dexen Routledge leads the Golden Bears in several ways. He captains the squad. As well, as of Jan. 25, the forward was second in the league in points with 69 through 26 games. Routledge was third in goals (32) and tied for third in assists (37).

“Dexen plays consistently full out every shift whether its even strength, (powerplay) or (penalty kill),” Roach said. “He plays under control and doesn’t let his emotions override his skills. Due to his hockey smarts, Dexen can be put in any situation and play with any team-mate.”

As of Jan. 25, the Golden Bears had four players among the league’s top 15 scorers. Hunter Andries was 10th with 43 points in 24 games. Beckham Clarke sat 13th with 40 points in 25 games and Jaden Browning Lozinski had 39 over 25 contests for 15th.

At the other end of the ice, Owen Charles leads VCI with nine wins. He has a 4.34 goals against average. Cameron Schoonbaert had six wins and a 3.44 GAA. On defence, Rhyse Gabrielle, Lane Flecknor, Lincoln Harvey and Jaxon Hayden have seen a lot of ice time, Roach said.

“All defence men are improving their puck moving, both on

the rush and headsup passing,” Roach said. “Constant reminders of ‘defence first’ and quick up puck movement has been stressed and improvement is ongoing.”

The coach said on the Golden Bears everyone has a role and have worked at improving themselves at it.

“Hockey is more than what the average fan sees and the ‘little things’ (goalies stopping rims, backchecking with a purpose, staying in lanes to block shots, ...) that players are improving at helps the team be successful. If we play the right way, we have a chance at winning every game and giving the fans something to cheer about,” Roach wrote in an email.

RMHS Renegades

The Reston/Melita/Hartney/Souris Renegades high school hockey co-op is taking important steps in its first season. Previously the co-op was Reston/Elkhorn/Melita/Pierson.

“With lots of towns nowadays not being able to field their owns and having to co-op with other towns, you see a wide variety attributes come to teams,” coach Kelly Wright said. “Something interesting about this team, even though the players come from different towns, and some have never played together, our team has built a well round culture that is being led by a good group of veteran players. With co-ops, culture is something that does take a couple years to refine and this new co-op has basically done it in half a season.”

The Renegades bench boss is pleased with how his squad has battled adversity.

“We have had a small roster and have struggled with injury throughout the season,” Wright said. “This group does not quit. They are a good group of guys, and they are buying



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Golden Bears look sharp in the season’s new team jerseys on Nov. 22 for a game vs Major Pratt: (l-r) Coach Jonathan Lansing, Golden Bears Jaxson Hayden, Dexen Routledge and Hunter Andries, with Coaches Doug Roach and Logan Roach.

into the goals of the team. Foremost, they are a group that interact well on and off the ice together.”

As of Jan. 25, the team had an 8-11-0 record. Most recently, on Jan. 22, it beat the Boissevain/Deloraine/Waskada/Pierson Broncos, 2-1, in overtime. Ty Tosh scored the winning goal. This season he has a team-best 12 goals in 15 games. Chase Flannery leads the Renegades in scoring with 24 points in 20 games.

Goalie Willem Yuel has been an important leader for the new team. The Grade 12 student attends Brandon’s Neelin High School. As that institution does not have a team, Yuel has been available for other squads. Last season he competed for Minnedosa/Erickson.

“Willem has brought experience to our team,” Wright said. “This being his final year he has been able to fine tune his skills up to this point. He is very competitive and hard worker and expects the same from his teammates.”

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Billy Derlago from Beulah, Manitoba is a former NHL player, now retired. Billy was born August 25, 1958, in Birtle, Manitoba. He played his minor hockey in Birtle and Miniota. He was a very gifted and talented athlete, so it wasn’t long before scouts started taking notice of his athletic abilities.

Sports in general came easy to Billy, as he had a God-given talent. Under the watchful eye of his older brother Steve Derlago, Bill practiced his shooting at an old shed, with a piece of tin in front of it. He was a great ball player too. Bill played with the Binscarth Orioles at the age of 14 and played short stop and second base. He finished fourth in league hitting with an average of .320. Remember, he did this at age 14! He garnered interest from the Cincinnati Reds of

the National Baseball League!

One way Billy stayed in shape, besides the ice and the ball diamond, was the “Hookway Training Camp” in Beulah. Mr. Ulley hired him at age 12 and 13 to treat untreated fence posts. There were four cement pits containing a solution to treat the green posts making them last longer. Mr. Ulley owned the store in Beulah and happened to be the Stepdad of my wife Celia.

Hockey was his first love, so he went and played with the Brandon Travellers in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League. In 45 games, he logged 59 points. As a 14-year-old he finished tenth in the goal scoring with 38.

In 1975, Bill suited up with the Brandon Wheat Kings, where he put up some astounding numbers. In his first season he gained over a hundred points. His second season with the

Wheaties, he scored 96 goals and had a total of 178 points, and in his third season, a broken leg prevented him from possibly setting an all-time record in Major Junior hockey. In 52 games, he scored 89 goals and had 152 points. When he was injured, he still had 20 more games he could have played in. He scored his fiftieth goal of the season that year in just 27 games which still stands as a record!

In 1978, Amateur Draft Billy, was drafted fourth overall by the Vancouver Canucks. He played only 9 games that year but scored 4 goals and had 4 assists when he injured his knee while getting hit by Denis Potvin of the New York Islanders.

In 1979 Bill played 54 games with Vancouver before being traded with Rick Vaive to the Toronto Maple Leafs. This ended up being the worst trade in Vancouver’s history, which was made by then

General Manager Jake Milford. Milford later admitted that it was one trade he would never make again! Going to Vancouver from Toronto was Dave Williams, and Jerry Butler. Dave “Tiger” Williams scored 83 goals in Vancouver and Jerry Butler scored 19. Billy scored 161 goals and Rick Vaive scored 299 with the Leafs. I would say it is pretty obvious who got the best deal of the trade! Rick and Billy were the number one picks of the Canucks in 1978 and 1979 respectively. Injuries were a part of the game and Billy certainly had his share of them!

Billy was traded to the Boston Bruins for Tom Fergus, then he was off to Winnipeg Jets for the 1986-87 season. Next was the Quebec Nordiques before finishing his career in HC Ambri-Piotta Switzerland. Billy scored 189 goals along with 227 assists for 416 points in just 555 games!



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Billy Derlago of Beulah Manitoba

In 1999, Billy was inducted into the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame as an Honoured Member in the Player Category. He is ranked 35th in the all-time Toronto Maple Leafs scoring and was named 75th of the top 100 Toronto Maple Leafs. Dave Keon is number one.

“Once a Leaf, always a Leaf” Billy retired from

Hockey. He worked at a car dealership. Now that he is fully retired, Billy plays some hockey with the Toronto Maple Leaf Alumni.

Bill and Rick Vaive remain the best of Buds. All in all what an amazing career he had, all the way from Beulah, Manitoba to the NHL. Billy “D” you did all of rural Manitoba proud!

It's all about the slide!

16 rinks battle at Kenton Bonspiel



Event A winners: Skip Lawrence Daniel, Rob Curtis, Travis Hunter, and Leslie Burke.



Event C winners: Skip Brodie Hunter, Brady Daniel, Brett Hemrica, and Bob Hunter.



PHOTOS BY JESSICA COULTER

Event B winners: Skip Dennis Veitch, Cam White, Ian Dyer, and Jeff Dickson.

By Jessica Coulter
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Another fantastic year of the Kenton Annual Open Bonspiel is in the books. Sixteen rinks came out for the event which started Wednesday, January 22 and ran until Saturday night, January 25. Every team that signed up was guaranteed a minimum of three games. There was 29 games played. Players as young as eleven years old come to play.

Each night a great group of volunteers gave of their time and their kitchens to make supper to feed the curling crews. There was Hamburgers, hotdogs, chili, sandwiches, soup and desserts on the first two nights. Friday was mouth-watering fried chicken and all the fixings and Saturday the volunteers served up a roast beef supper for all to enjoy.

To prepare for the four-day event, Don Carter was lead organizer. Brent Houston took care of getting the ice ready. Lawrence

Daniel was draw master for the bonspiel. Betty Houston and Douglas Stevenson gathered all the donations and prizes.

The Clair Hunter Memorial trophy was awarded to the winners of event A. The winners were Skip Lawrence Daniel, Rob Curtis, Travis Hunter, and Leslie Burke. They also won gift cards to Manitoba Liquor Marts.

Event B was sponsored by the Valleyview Co-op and the winners received gift cards to the co-op. The winners were Skip Dennis Veitch, Cam White, Ian Dyer, and Jeff Dickson.

Event C was sponsored by Brierwood Creek Café and Grill and the winners received gift cards to the Café. The winners were Skip Brodie Hunter, Brady Daniel, Brett Hemrica, and Bob Hunter.

The curling committee would like to thank all of the sponsors of the event. The sponsors make the full bonspiel possible.

ARBI is closing

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

An organization that was forged to promote cooperation in drainage issues between Manitoba, Saskatchewan and North Dakota has been shuttered.

Water covers 71 per cent of the Earth's surface. Of this only 2.5 per cent is freshwater. There are 276 transboundary river basins and 200 transboundary aquifers in the world. The Assiniboine River basin (ARB) covers an area of 162,000 square kilometers and is made up of 3 sub-basins: Souris, Qu'Appelle and Assiniboine. Over 1.5 million people live in the basin.

Many agencies are involved in managing the water in the ARB including federal, provincial and municipal governments, conservation agencies and water boards as well as non-governmental organizations like the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation and the Keystone Agricultural Producers.

Many will recall the extreme flooding event that occurred in 2011 across the entire basin with the City of Minot evacuating 11,000 residents. This event brought new urgency to water management planning that had been ongoing since 2008. Stakeholders in the ARB met in Virden in March of 2014 to plan the next steps, and in November of that year the Assiniboine River Basin Initiative (ARBI) was formed. Serious flooding in 2014 and 2017 further demonstrated the need for this planning.

The mandate of the new organization was to forge connections between the many players to enable

environmental, social and economic sustainability across the basin and to find fair and equitable solutions that balance current and future needs. These require the players to acknowledge the need for change and work collaboratively across jurisdictional boundaries. ARBI acted as a liaison between stakeholders, with varied and sometimes conflicting interests, providing research and education, and most importantly a forum for all to meet and exchange ideas.

Cooperation Highlighted

Robert Sandford, a leading thinker on water issues in Canada is Director of the Western Watersheds Research Collaborative, and an associate of the Centre for Hydrology at the University of Saskatchewan. At an ARBI conference in 2016 he said, "We are going to have to work together on new technologies, new ways of cooperating between jurisdictions and new ways to become more efficient. The key may be to break the barriers to jurisdictional cooperation."

The ARB encompasses the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan as well as the state of North Dakota. There is a strained relationship between Saskatchewan and Manitoba regarding water management and although there is a memorandum of understanding between the provinces, it has not led to meaningful communication or coordination on water issues. This disconnect has resulted in recurring problems, such as springtime flooding from Saskatchewan, leaving local stakeholders frustrated.

From the beginning there was a lack of financial support for ARBI from the Saskatchewan government. Although there was grassroots enthusiasm in the province with local entities supporting the initiatives, the provincial government refrained from providing funding.

Despite these difficulties ARBI continued to

foster grassroots communication and cross-border collaboration through workshops and meetings. These events, such as small dam workshops, brought together stakeholders from Saskatchewan and other regions that led to cooperative discussions about water management.

An important role for ARBI has been to highlight successful planning and action allowing all parties to learn from these experiences. The 2011 flood, which originated in Saskatchewan, had a widespread impact. North Dakota responded with extensive flood protection measures, including infrastructure development and environmental restoration. There has been a lack of similar initiatives in the Canadian provinces.

Funding Dries Up

Despite hosting conferences and fostering community engagement the lack of tangible, large-scale projects limited ARBI's visibility. With its mandate focused on research and cooperative communication rather than infrastructure, the group's achievements were not immediately obvious and their \$50,000 grant from the province came to an end. As this grant had been used to secure matching contributions from North Dakota, its cancellation was a critical setback for the organization.

In a press release announcing the organization's closure the ARBI board of directors said, "As a result of one of the primary support pillars indicating they were stepping away from the organization it left the board in very difficult position to continue operations as a transboundary organization. Our website will remain with archived documents with the hopes that it can continue to serve as a useful tool and perhaps a catalyst should, at some point in the future, another organization with similar goals and objectives be formed."

SPORTS

OIL KINGS SHUT OUT ROYALS, 10-0

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Everything seemed to be working on Jan. 24 for the Virden Oil Kings.

At home against the Deloraine Royals, the Tiger Hills Hockey League squad was dangerous offensively and stingy at the other end of the ice. This all culminated in a 10-0 victory.

“It was great to see us put the pressure on early and keep it going all game,” Oil Kings forward Shane Keown said. “We definitely have some skilled players on our team, and when everything is clicking, it makes it pretty enjoyable to be on the winning side. Hoping we continue that into the next couple games and keep it up for playoffs.”

With the win, the Virden team improved to 11-2-0-1, as of Jan. 26, the Oil Kings THHL Western Division.

The team is slated to host Melita on Feb. 2. The Bisons have a 6-6-1-0 record. In their only other meeting this season, the Oil Kings beat Melita, 6-5, in overtime. Jason Bowles delivered the winning goal on Dec. 14.

Against the Royals, veteran goalie Tristin Rinn and newcomer Tanner Rowan combined to earn the shutout. Rinn, a stalwart in between the pipes for Virden for several years, had nine saves. Rowan stopped five shots. It was his first action in a THHL contest.

“As for our shutout, congrats to Rinner and T-Row,” Keown said. “Pretty awesome to see both goalies keep that zero on the board. We are very lucky to have three talented and young local goalies in those two



PHOTO BY DALE DAVISON

A near miss for Virden’s Jeremy Johnson (11) but he didn’t miss every time. He finished the game with four goals and an assist. The Oil Kings topped the Royals 10-0 in last Friday’s THHL contest.

and Reider (Eric Reid). Couldn’t ask for better guys to stop the puck.”

The Oil Kings’ special teams was strong against the Royals. The squad was one-for-two on the powerplay. With the man advantage, Ty Lewis scored at the 13:28 mark in the first period. That marker - which stood up as the game-winner - opened the flood gates.

Jason Bowles scored at even strength to put Virden up 2-0. Keown scored shorthanded to give the Oil Kings a 3-0 lead. Virden did not allow Deloraine to score on any of their three powerplay opportunities.

In the second session, the Oil Kings really got roll-

ing. They scored a half dozen goals to extend their lead to 9-0. Jeremy Johnson lit the lamp four times in the period. He finished with five points. So did Ty Lewis, who collected four assists. In addition to Johnson, Nolan Wallace and Jason Bowles scored in the second period.

Wallace had the game’s lone third period goal. Keown and Bradley Bowles each had four points. Bradley Bowles leads the THHL with 44 points in 13 games. Wallace, Jason Bowles, and Tanner Lewis all earned three points.

HAMELIN BRINGS SKILL, UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO OIL CAPS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

As a rookie, Maxx Hamelin has already proven he can be an X factor for the Virden Oil Capitals.

As of Jan. 26, the 17-year-old from Winnipeg was seventh on the Manitoba Junior Hockey League team in scoring. The 5-foot-10, 177-pounder had seven goals and 20 points through 33 games. What has allowed him to put up points?

“Being able to play with great teammates who push me in practice and give me opportunities to show my strengths in the game,” Hamelin said.

As of Jan. 26, he has had six multi-point games. That included a three-point effort in a 4-0 win over Niverville on Oct. 19.

“Maxx thinks the

game at a very high level and has always had an ability to score,” Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. “He has a real good shot and he expects to score each night. He is a competitive guy and, when he plays with pace, he is very dangerous even as one of the younger players in our league. We are excited to see what he might be able to accomplish as an Oil Cap.”

Hamelin has fit in on and off the ice. He billets with Megan, Trevor, Rhyse, and Makayla Gabrielle.

Regarding playing for the Oil Caps, Hamelin said, “I have enjoyed hanging out with all the guys around and away from the rink and spending time helping out around the community.”

Hamelin joined the team after playing for the U18 AAA Win-

nipeg Bruins. As well, he brought to the Oil Capitals his experience from playing in some high profile events. Hamelin helped Team Canada to gold at the 2024 U18 World Men’s Ball Hockey Championships in Zilina, Slovakia. Over six games, he recorded three goals and one assist.

“It was an amazing, once in a lifetime experience and a dream come true to represent my country and win a gold medal,” Hamelin said.

The year before, he helped Team Canada earn second place at the U16 ball hockey world championships. Hamelin was an assistant captain and received the tournament MVP award.

In 2023, he played for Team Manitoba at the Can-

ada Winter Games in Prince Edward Island. The team placed sixth.

“Playing at the Canada Winter Games was an honour,” Hamelin said. “It helped me realize that hockey is important but the journey and meeting other elite talent and people is what it’s all about.”

For the past two years, Hamelin represented Manitoba at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships. The Red River Métis athlete helped Manitoba to gold in 2023 and bronze last year. Hamelin was the male national tournament’s leading scorer. He was named the

Top Forward.

“The NAHC was an honour to be a

part of for the last two years,” he said. “I enjoyed being able to play the game I love while spending time and making memories with different players around Manitoba. I am looking forward to represent my province in this upcoming NAHC 2025.”



SPORTS

OIL CAPS PICK UP POINTS IN THE STANDINGS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Oil Capitals have earned points in their last two outings.

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League team doubled up the Dauphin Kings, 4-2, on Jan. 25. On Jan. 23, the Oil Capitals earned a point in the standings in a 5-4 overtime loss to the Winnipeg Freeze.

“We didn’t like our game against the Freeze at all,” Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. “Battled back to get a point but really not the way we want to play. Then against Dauphin, I thought it might have been one of our most complete games of the year. We bent a little early but then I felt we took the game over as it moved along. We got great goaltending, defended well as a five-man unit, our penalty kill was very good and we got scoring from up and down our lineup.”

Last week the team also fell, 4-2, to Waywayseecappo on Jan. 21. As of Jan. 26, the Oil Capitals had a 16-23-1-0 record. With 33 points in the standings, the squad and the Waywayseecappo Wolverines were tied for fourth in the MJHL MGEU Western Division.

The Virden team hosts the Kings on Jan. 31. The Oil Caps head to Winnipeg on Feb. 2 to take on the Blues.

MJHL-SJHL Showcase

Ty Plaisier, Bryce Bryant, and Nathan Schaefer were slated to play for MJHL squads in the showcase event against Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League all-star teams on Jan. 28-29 in Winnipeg after the Empire-Advance deadline. Ramsey, assistant coach Curtis Brolund, and athletic therapist Dana Warrener were also set to participate.

“It’s just a real good event first of all for players to showcase themselves to scouts and coaches from higher levels and secondly, being able to network with other players and coaches is important and exciting,” Ramsey said. “You never know when one of those connections may pay off. We are all looking forward to being in Winnipeg for a competitive event.”

Oil Caps 4, Kings 2

Virden’s own Bryant lit the lamp twice as the Oil Capitals beat the Kings on the road. Caron Wright and Bryant scored in the first period to stake the visitors to a 2-0 lead. Bryant’s goal came shorthanded.

In the second period, Kings forward Cayden Glover scored twice to knot the game at 2-2. Glover’s second goal came with the man advantage.

Adler Johnston, who had two points on the night, scored in the third period to put Virden on top. Bryant capped the scoring with his second goal of the night.

Oil Capitals goalie Loic Morin stopped 37 of the 39 shots he faced. He helped Virden kill off five of Dauphin’s six powerplay opportunities. Cole Sheffield made 18 saves for Dauphin.

Freeze 5, Oil Caps 4 OT

The Oil Capitals fought back from a 4-0 first period deficit to force overtime. In the extra session, former Oil Cap Parker Rolston scored the game winner. It was his second of the night.

After the Freeze took a 4-0 lead, Noel Englot found the back of the net to get Virden on the scoreboard. That marker made the score 4-1 at



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

Oil Caps play the Winnipeg Freeze on Thursday, January 23. Game goes in to overtime.

the first intermission.

In the second period, Liam Goertzen, on a powerplay, and Brett Sabel scored to pull the Oil Capitals within one, 4-3. Moosomin’s Marshall Light scored shorthanded for Virden to knot the game at 4-4.

Bryant and Tyler Dodgson each had two assists. Virden goalie Gavin Renwick had 14 saves. Freeze netminder Ben Chornomydz stopped 37 shots. Besides Rolston, the Winnipeg team got goals from Carter Kingerski, Cam Sarna, and Thomas Gale.

Wolverines 4, Oil Caps 2

Sabel gave Virden a 1-0 lead at home against the Wolverines. In the second period, Rhett Perrin tied things up at 1-1. However, Johnston gave Virden the lead back, 2-1, before the second intermission.

In the third, Waywayseecappo scored three straight goals. The last one was into an empty net. Scoring for the Wolverines were Lucas Perry, Perrin, and Griffin Ayotte.

Morin had 22 saves. His Waywayseecappo counterpart, Mariko Bercier, stopped 41 shots.

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MJHL NEWS

DEREK HOLTOM

The Winkler Flyers moved into a tie for first place in the East Division Saturday night with their second straight shutout over the visiting Northern Manitoba Blizzard. These were two of the hottest teams in the MJHL heading into this contest, but the Flyers have turned into a juggernaut that seems unstoppable at the moment.

Where do we begin? First off congratulations to the Neepawa Titans, who became the first team to defeat the Winkler Flyers since early December with an overtime victory last week that only seemed to fire up the Flyers even more.

Winkler still has an astounding point streak going, with at least one point in 21 straight games. Their last regulation loss was on Nov. 10 against Virden. Their record since then is a jaw-dropping 18-0-3, and five of those victories came in extra time, proving they can win those close games.

Netminder Liam Ernst is playing on a whole other level of late. He has eight shutouts this year already – including five in his last 10 starts. The league's No. 1 netminder sports a GAA of 1.54

and a save percentage of .940. Just hand him the goalie of the year award now.

The Flyers are winning by defense. They are second in the league in goals scored at 159, but are first in goals allowed at only 75. Their chief rival, the Steinbach Pistons, have scored more but also allowed more. The Pistons have a goal differential of plus 83 – one better than the Flyers.

Those two teams combined only have 14 regulation losses – third place Portage has 11 all their own (and they're still only six points back of these two powerhouses).

Two of these three teams will play each other in the first round of the playoffs, which seems almost criminal at this point. Maybe the MJHL should look at a situation where the top two seeds in each division get home ice and then they reseed after that.

If that were the case today, Dauphin and the Northern Manitoba Blizzard would have home-ice advantage in the West Division and Winkler and Steinbach would have home-ice in the East Division. Reseeding the next four best teams would see the first-round matchups look like this: Winkler versus Selkirk, Steinbach versus Neepawa, Dauphin versus Niverville and Northern Manitoba versus Portage.

If the playoffs were to start today, it would be Dauphin versus Waywayseecappo or Virden, Northern Manitoba versus Neepawa, Winkler versus Niverville and Steinbach versus Portage.

You can see the pros and cons of both scenarios. Only three West Division teams would qualify in a reseeding scenario. But you also wouldn't have the second and third best team in the league facing one another in the opening round either.

The MJHL Original 16 Players of the Week

are headed up by goaltender Mitchell Kathler from the Portage Terriers. He only played one game but he made it count, winning via shutout over the Steinbach Pistons in a potential first-round playoff preview.

Next up is forward Brody Beauchemin from the Winkler Flyers. In a pair of games Beauchemin scored three times and added five assists for a monster eight-point week.

We head back to the goal for the final winner as Dauphin's Cole Sheffield earned the nod. Not only did he win both starts and posted a 1.50 GAA and a .951 save percentage, he also chipped in with a rare goalie assist.



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REF MEMORIES

REF TO WRITER

GERRY NOLAN



Over the years of officiating, I met a lot of people who did the behind the scenes work for teams. These people volunteered their time so that the on-ice product could focus on the game. In senior hockey it takes much time and effort to get the product on the ice that you want, so the players can just play.

I would like to draw attention to some individuals who gave their time freely to help their team succeed.

Ray and Lenore Peacock from Birtle. It was always nice to see them. They would want to know how you were. What I was busy doing? Just wonderful caring people who volunteered their time to help with the Birtle Bruins senior hockey team.

Bob McKenzie from Miniota usually was taking the money from the door for admission. Bob always had a smile and we would share a laugh or to talk about something and he would on occasion ask, well Ger what are you going to miss tonight? I usually just headed to the ref with a grin. It was always great to go to Miniota.

Ray Brethour from Hamiota has been involved with the Huskies and Hockey Manitoba most of his life. Ray is not usually stuck for words but has been dedicated to senior hockey, coaching, playing and

doing so much for Senior hockey across Manitoba. It is always interesting to get his take on hockey matters. Thank God for the last 30 plus years his Habs have not won a Stanley Cup!

Ray Laraway from Oak Lake coached hockey teams in Oak Lake for over 25 years. He did this while running his children to all kinds of sports. Ray was someone you could just sit and listen to talk about hockey. His son Don Laraway was drafted by the Boston Bruins, but his best moments were with the Houston Aeros of the World Hockey Association.

Ted Taylor from Oak Lake played pro hockey in the NHL with Vancouver, Detroit and Minnesota. He was the captain of the Houston Aeros. When he came back home to farm, he coached and taught kids about hockey and wanted to create just a place for kids to play the game.

Craig Whyte from Kenton put together a senior team in the early seventies. It provided a place for local players to continue to play. Craig played for a number of years then coached, managed and was the team representative for years. He too just wanted to provide a place for guys to just keep playing after minor hockey and to make lifelong friendships.

Volunteers that do the work behind the scenes rarely get noticed or maybe even thanked, and they do it for the love of their team and their community. It takes many volunteers to make a team, or a rink run smoothly. There are early mornings, late nights and countless miles put in so others get to enjoy our game.

Thank you to you all. Then there are the people who maintain the arena ice surface, clean up after everyone has gone home, thank you! Oh yes and do not forget the ones who help when there are players injuries to deal with. Special people with special talents.

So many people make it happen, and they do it for the love of their kids, other people and because they have passion and love for OUR Game, Hockey!

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McNEILL HARASYMCHUK
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Glen Harasymchuk, B. Sc., LL. B. • Anique Timmerman, JD
 Larissa Sosnowski, JD • Jessica Humphries, JD

Buckingham Building, 243 Raglan Street West
 P.O. Box 520, Viriden, MB R0M 2C0
 Phone: 204-748-1220 • Fax: 204-748-3007

For Sale

Farmland for Sale in RM of Pipestone

	2025 Assessment	2024 Taxes
NW 12-7-27 WPM	\$134,100	\$333.18

Land is located on Road #2 Highway and Huston Road in the RM of Pipestone. Frontage or Area: 139.68 Acres as per 2024 Property Tax Bill. Land has been used as hayland (alfalfa/brome) for past several years. Land is fenced. Manitoba Hydro Meter on property to old yard site.

NW 12-7-27 WPM: MTS Caveat in place (MTS Tower situated on property).

*EXC Road Plan 1353 BLTO; EXC Plan 43187 BLTO; EXC ALL that portion taken for the Right of Way of the Canadian Pacific Railway to SS Plan 42411 BLTO.

Mineral and oil rights are exempt.
 Interested parties should rely on their own inspection.
 Highest or any offers not necessarily accepted.
 2024 taxes are paid, 2025 taxes will be paid by the purchaser.
 Deadline for offers is Friday, Mar. 7, 2025.
 For more information, call or text 204-918-3840.
 Offers to be mailed to:
 High Bluff Ranch Ltd.
 PO Box 57
 Reston MB
 R0M 1X0

Farmland for Sale in RM of Pipestone

	2025 Assessment	2024 Taxes
NE 1-8-27 WPM	\$307,200	\$762.92
NW 1-8-27 WPM	\$296,300	\$736.29
SE 1-8-27 WPM	\$292,000	\$725.58
SW 1-8-27 WPM	\$313,600	\$779.33
SE 2-8-27 WPM	\$304,200	\$755.61

Land is located on Road 42N and 156W – 157W. Approximately 120 to 135 working acres per quarter. Land is classified as “E” soil on Crop Insurance; 2024 crop was wheat. Offering all of Section 1 as a unit. Offering SE 2-8-27 as a separate unit.

Mineral and oil rights are exempt.
 Interested parties should rely on their own inspection.
 Highest or any offers not necessarily accepted.
 2024 taxes are paid, 2025 taxes will be paid by the purchaser.
 Deadline for offers is Friday, Feb. 28, 2025.
 For more info call 204-748-5178 or 204-854-2543.
 Offers to be sent to:
 Stewart Farms
 Box 9
 Pipestone MB, R0M 1T0

2 LOTS in Shoal Lake

with self store units containing 14 individual storage spaces. These units are well used and generate a good return on investment. Call southwest storage (204) 764-2734

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JOIN OUR TEAM IN THE EXCITING WORLD OF FIREARMS AND THE OUTDOORS!

Wolverine Supplies Ltd. located in Southwestern Manitoba is searching for a qualified individual to join our Shipping Department. This is a full time position.

ABOUT THE ROLE
This is a dynamic position that plays a key role in ensuring customer satisfaction by managing the efficient and accurate shipment of orders.

THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT WILL HAVE TO MEET THE FOLLOWING QUALIFICATIONS:

- Ability to lift up to 70 lbs.
- Attention to Detail
- Computer aptitude.
- Valid drivers license.
- Bondable
- Possess or be willing to obtain a valid Firearms PAL (Possession and Acquisition License).
- Familiar with Canada Post, Purolator, and shipping processes an asset.

DUTIES TO INCLUDE:

- Picking orders
- Packaging orders
- Invoicing orders
- Restocking supplies.
- Tracking orders
- Providing customers with updates

COMPANY HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN IN PLACE

ONLY APPLICANTS SELECTED FOR AN INTERVIEW WILL BE CONTACTED.

PLEASE EMAIL RESUME AND COVER LETTER TO:

Genn@wolverinesupplies.com

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WOLVERINE SUPPLIES

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Full Time Music Teacher Wanted

Boundary Lane Colony School is seeking a full time music teacher applicant to teach music at school for grades 1 through 12 near Elkhorn MB.

- Looking for singing teaching but instrumental talents also very welcome.
- Preferably 2 different sessions for the different age groups of students.
- Flexible times available.
- Would preferably like someone with a Christian faith background willing to teach in a Hutterite context setting.

Contact Jason @ 204-851-3965 for any inquiries.

Pasture Booking



2025 KIRKELLA COMMUNITY PASTURE BOOKINGS

Feeders/Yearlings- Steers Only \$90.00 per season

Calves \$40.00 per head, per season, for walk-in calves born On or after January 2, 2025 and for calves born in pasture.

Deadline for applications February 7, 2025.
Patron forms available at RM offices and online at wallace-woodworth.com
DEPOSITS DUE MARCH 31, 2025

This position commences as soon as possible.

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

For Sale

Farm land for sale in Hamiota RM

South half of 5-13-23
Approximately 260 acres broken
Others accepted until
February 15th 2025
Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of property
Highest or any offer not necessary accepted.
A deposit of \$5000 to be paid at time of signing of agreement of sale.

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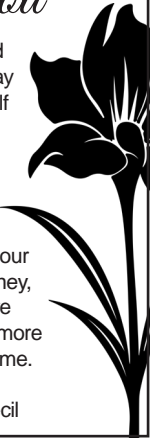
Todd 204-904-9705

Thank-you

Thank-you

A special thank-you to friends and family who braved the cold Saturday and roads to help Cecil and myself celebrate our 65th anniversary. Special thanks to Shelly, Brent, Scott, and Garry and for all your hard work to honour our day. Thanks, Margaret, for the lovely corsage and boutonniere and for your help. The flowers, chocolates, money, phone calls, cards and visits were appreciated and enjoyed. You are more than welcome to drop in anytime.

Love from Mavis and Cecil



For Rent



LAND FOR RENT

Ducks Unlimited Canada is offering Land for rent in the following RM's:

First four listings are cash rent, one-year rental agreements

RM of Clanwilliam-Erickson:

SW30 & NW 19 – 17 – 18 W1 230 acres

RM of Oakview:

NW 23 – 13 – 19 W1 105 acres

RM of Prairie View:

S ½ 34 – 17 – 25 W1 150 acres

RM of Whitehead:

SW 19 – 9 – 22 W1 95 acres

Last listing is a cash rent, two-year rental agreement

RM of Minto-Odanah:

SE21, N½ & SE10, S½ 15-13-18 W1 825 acres

Tenders close at NOON on February 21, 2025. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

Anyone wishing to submit a tender should provide in writing: name, phone number, price per acre, crop and weed control plans. Cash rent is due JUNE 1, 2025.

For a copy of the rental agreement and/or specifics on the lands being rented, please contact **Charlotte Crawley** call/text: (204) 868-5599 or email: c_crawley@ducks.ca

If emailing a tender, please indicate "Land Rental Tender" in the subject line and email to: info@ducks.ca. If mailing a tender, please indicate "Land for Rent" on your envelope and send to: Ducks Unlimited Canada Unit 2-545 Conservation Drive Brandon MB R7A 7L8

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Prairie View Municipality Regular Council meeting brief

Submitted RM OF PRAIRIE VIEW

The Dec. 10, 2024 meeting came to order at 9am with councillors present: Reeve Roger Wilson, L. Clark, M. Fulcher, M. Butler, D. Oliver, T. Peel, D. Cole and via Zoom: R. Bonchuk; Staff Present: CAO C. Bonchuk and Admin Assistant M. Amy

Council received information from the KGS Group (engineering consulting firm) on the Birtle Riverside Park Dam Safety Inspection Report via Zoom. At 10:00 AM council entered a public hearing regarding a Conditional Use #10-PV-24-CU and Variance Order # 08-PV-24-VO with Lisa Hamilton, Development Officer present and applicant of land owner David

Van Der Merwe, was present via Zoom.

The property involved, legally described as SW 29-15-26. Roll #460600 in the Prairie View Municipality was for approval of a Conditional Use Order to provide for the establishment of a Farm Dwelling use in the AG zone AND to hear the Variation Order Application # 08-PV-24-VO to decrease the minimum front yard setback of 125 feet to 10 feet.

Notice was placed on the Municipal Bulletin Boards on Nov. 22, 2024 and due to the Canada Post strike notices were not mailed to adjacent landowners; newspaper ads were placed in the Virden Empire Advance and Crossroads for the week of Nov. 29th and Dec. 6th and posted on MWPD website by

Mid-West Planning District.

D. Van Der Merwe spoke to the application regarding the property legally described as SW 29-15-26 in the Prairie View Municipality asking for approval of a Conditional Use Order to provide for the establishment of a Farm Dwelling use in the AG zone; and for a Variation Order Application # 08-PV-24-VO to decrease the minimum front yard setback of 125 feet to 10 feet.

Council adjourned the Conditional Use Hearing to reconvene the regular council meeting.

Economic Development Officer Zoey Jebb brought an update.

New Business

Council approved D. Van Der Merwe application and included in the resolution,

that the applicant is responsible to obtain all permits required from the Mid-West Planning District.

Other matters included: Meeting Request - Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure

Bulk Water Inquiry/Issue M. Rivard Casual Request Miniota Community Centre (MCC) Land (tabled) And the MCC Expansion Project

Taxes cancelled for 2024 properties totalled \$5269.39. The addition of Accounts Receivable that remain unpaid as of Dec. 10, 2024 will be added to the Tax Roll. Council reviewed and approved accounts issued in the month of Nov 2024 totalling \$2,467,050.65 and approved the August, September, and October 2024 Bank Recon-

ciliations.

Interim Budget

Council made interim estimates of all operating and capital expenditures of the municipality for the period from Jan. 1, 2025 and a motion was introduced to approve these interim estimates as follows:

General Operating

General Government Services \$800,000
Protective Services \$230,000
Transportation Services \$1,900,000
Environmental Services \$220,000
Public Health amp; Welfare Services \$44,000
Environmental Services \$69,000
Economic Development Services \$488,000
Recreation amp; Cultural Services \$369,000

Fiscal Services \$550,000
TOTAL: \$4,670,000

General Capital Requirements

Borne By Operating Funds \$100,000
Borne By Reserves \$300,000
TOTAL: \$400,000
Utility Operating Requirements
Total Waterworks and Sewer \$150,000

Utility Capital Requirements

Borne By Reserves \$70,000
A motion to adopt this interim budget was carried. Third reading of the by-law governing the organization of Prairie View Municipality council and committees was passed unanimously. IN CAMERA council discussed a personnel matter. Back in the regular meeting, council voted to support the MCC expansion project up to 25% of total cost.



Tundra Oil & Gas Place: 204-748-2736

Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440

Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540

Town Office: 204-748-2440

Waste Disposal Grounds: 204-748-6033

Animal Control: 204-851-1810

Under the Authority of the Planning Act Notice of Public Hearing

On the date and at the time and location shown below, a **PUBLIC HEARING** will be held to receive representations from any persons who wish to make them in respect to the following matter:

Town of Virden BY-LAW NO. 2816

Being an Amendment to the Town of Virden Zoning By-Law No. 2769, as amended.

LOCATION: Town of Virden Council Chambers
232 Wellington Street West

DATE & TIME: February 11, 2025 @ 7:30 PM

GENERAL INTENT:

To change a drive in food service from conditional to permitted in commercial highway zoning, add permitted uses to the Commercial Residential Institutional zoning, remove the requirement for a development permit for fencing, and a map amendment by rezoning (NE 21-10-26W Lot 1-13 Block 6 Plan 21152 from "RS-1" Residential Single Family to "CRI" Commercial-Residential-Institutional Zone) and (NE 21-10-26W Lot 1-13 Block 5 Plan 21152 from "RT" Residential Two Family to "CRI" Commercial-Residential-Institutional).

AREA AFFECTED: All lands within the Town of Virden

For more information, contact Cory Nixon, Development Officer at 204-851-0028 or devofficer@tcwvdp.ca



A copy of the above proposal and supporting material may be inspected at 236 Wellington St W (Town of Virden office) during normal office hours, Monday to Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm.

Copies may be made, and extracts taken therefrom, upon request.

Town of Virden Request for Quotation

Supply of Flowers and Plants – 2025

The Town of Virden is requesting quotations for the supply of flowers and plants for the various beds, containers and hanging baskets for 2025.

The supplier will be required to store, maintain, and care for the flowers and plants until scheduled planting of the various beds occur. Preference may be given to a bidder who can provide advice around planting methods and fertilization while generally acting as resource for Town Staff throughout the planting season.

For further information and/or to obtain a detailed order form with specifications, please contact Erica Darvill at 204-748-2440 or by email at executive.assistant@virden.ca or by visiting the Town of Virden website at: www.virden.ca/p/tenders-and-requests

DEADLINE FOR QUOTATIONS:
Friday, February 7, 2025.

Toonie Transportation

Starts February 4

Accessible transportation for only \$2

For schedule and information, call 204-851-7100

Upcoming Council Meetings:
February 11 & 25

Please Note:
Town of Virden Council meetings begin at 7:00 PM



2025 Dog and Cat Licenses

Now available for purchase at the Town Office.

Two stabbings in Birdtail First Nation community

Submitted
By RCMP

Two separate police reports of knife attacks occurred just four days apart in the community of Birdtail Sioux Dakota Nation. The reserve is 15 miles northwest of Miniota. These attacks put victims in the hospital. They are recovering.

On Dec. 31, Manitoba First Nations Police (MFNP) officers responded to a report of a stabbing victim who attended the Birdtail Health Center.

Police located a 28-year-old man suffering from severe stab wounds, the victim was transported to the Brandon Regional Health Centre, where he underwent surgery. The victim has since been discharged and is recovering. Police conducted a thorough investigation of the scene and recovered a knife, and a wooden club believed to have been used in the attack. The investi-

gation revealed that the victim had been attacked during a dispute involving two family members. Police believe that alcohol played a factor in the incident.

MFNP officers have arrested two suspects in connection with the incident:

James Donald Bunn, 43, of Birdtail Sioux First Nation, has been charged with aggravated assault. Issak Lathaniel Keyshawn Bunn, 21, also of Birdtail Sioux First Nation, has been charged with attempted murder.

Police looking for Shingoose. A male from Birdtail Sioux First Nation was stabbed and Manitoba First Nations Police (MFNP) are still looking for the suspect in this case.

On Jan. 3, officers received a report of a male with a stab wound. He was found on a road by public works employees.

Police located the victim suffering from severe injuries and experiencing heavy blood loss, EMS was re-

quested however due to the distance of an ambulance, the victim was transported to Russell Health Centre in a police vehicle. The victim received medical treatment and was stabilized. He is currently recovering from his injuries.

An investigation determined that the victim was stabbed by a family member, and an arrest warrant has been issued for, Shannon Christopher Shingoose, 40 years old, of Birdtail Sioux First Nation.

Shingoose has been charged with the following offences.

Aggravated assault
Assault with a weapon

If you have any information that could assist investigators with either incidents, contact MFNPS Birdtail Sioux First Nation Detachment at 204-569-4621 or the MFNPS TIPS line anonymously at 1-833-978-0048; or email TIPS@mfnpc.ca. The TIPS line is accessible 24/7 and monitored regularly.

Gertrude Gross celebrates 102nd birthday



SUBMITTED PHOTO

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Gertrude Gross has just celebrated her 102nd birthday. Her daughter Jennifer Gross, an Oak Lake resident, gave an account of her birthday in the Oak Lake News: "She celebrated her birthday in her room at the Rideau Park PCH in Brandon on Sunday, Jan. 19. About a dozen people came to wish her a happy birthday and one couple even put "and many more" on her card! Unfortunately, [Gertrude] wasn't quite as chipper that day as she had been a few days before though she did get a few stories told. She was still suffering the effects of a fall on Jan. 11 that gave her a bump on the head and a sore shoulder and hips. After extensive testing, she was declared fracture free and allowed to return home. Because of a suspected muscle pull, she can stand but can't walk. When I visited her a few days after returning back, I asked her how she was doing. [She replied], "Well, I can't walk yet." She was working on her exercises.... What an inspiring woman."

In conversation about her mother, Jennifer painted a picture of a lady of faith and intellect who, although she says, "I'm ready to go", has always admired people who live to 120."

Gertrude was caring for herself until she moved into personal care last June, at 101. She was up and about, doing everything for herself, until she fell recently.

It was 1994 when Gertrude's husband, John passed away. Over the decades,

he'd been a teacher and then principal at Boissevain K-12. Politically active with the Manitoba Social Credit Party, he was a candidate in the federal elections of 1974 and 1979 in the Brandon-Souris riding.

While John was outgoing, Gertrude is an introvert, logical and diplomatic, says Jennifer.

Gertrude is computer savvy and knows how to surf the web. If there's something she wants to know, she finds out. In fact, she does data entry for the Genealogical Society regarding the Mormon Church. Over a number of years, she's entered about 200,000 names. However, IT is always changing and when she runs into new formats, she's had to call a daughter to walk her through technological challenges.

What's her secret to longevity? Gertrude's family has a pattern of longevity. Her mother lived to be 95, and siblings neared their 90th birthdays. Gertrude didn't drink or smoke and paid attention to her health.

Although she'd trained as a nurse, she was a stay-at-home mom to a large family. Decades ago, she'd heard a head nurse say, 'all [prescription] drugs are toxic'. After that Gertrude began to look for alternatives such as homeopathy and nutritional supplements to maintain her health.

"She relishes experts and if a doctor has found a new way of doing things, she latches on to that," Jennifer adds, "She has great faith. This has seen her through, by praying and thanking."



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MPI and Snoman hit the trails and roadways to highlight snowmobile safety



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Left to right: Maria Campos, Vice President & Chief Customer and Product Officer, MPI; and Joe Thievin, Vice President, Snoman Inc. in front of a trail groomer

Submitted
By MANITOBA PUBLIC INSURANCE

January and February are great months for hitting the trails on your

snowmobile. It can be thrilling, challenging, and a great way to get a sense of community with other riders. It is also true that January and February have the highest fatality rates for snowmobilers in Manitoba.

Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) and Snoman Inc. are joining forces to highlight snowmobile safety to close out International Snowmobile Safety Week (January 12-18, 2025) and lead into Manitoba's first Winter Trails Day on February 8, 2025.

Earlier today, MPI and Snowman held a safety demonstration near Stonewall, where three different components of safety were highlighted:

Sharing the roadway

Trail safety and trail grooming equipment
Safety equipment for snowmobiles and riders

"By highlighting safety concerns, we are creating awareness that there are many proactive steps riders can take to make themselves safer while out on their snowmobiles, especially wearing a helmet, controlling speed, and riding sober," said Maria Campos, Vice President & Chief Customer and Product Officer. "MPI doesn't advocate for and educate about safety alone. It is through partnerships, like the one we have with Snoman, that we are able to fulfill our road safety mission – whether it is on or off-road."

From 2021-2024, there were 12 snowmobile fatalities in Manitoba. Speed was the leading contributing factor. Other factors included:

- Alcohol impairment
- Lack of helmet use
- Driver inexperience
- Careless driving

Snoman emphasized that riders have to be aware of the safety concerns.

"Excessive speed is a contributing factor in the majority of incidents and can lead to fatalities," stated Jason Wiebe, President, Snoman Inc. "Riders have to be cognizant of their abilities and to not impair their sense of control by consuming alcohol or drugs while riding. Safety is first and foremost for our organization."

Safety is a shared goal for MPI and Snoman. When you register your snowmobile, MPI collects a \$25 non-refundable annual fee on all off-road vehicle registrations on behalf of the Government of Manitoba to support trail maintenance and development, off-road vehicle safety education and training programs, and rehabilitation of public lands impacted by off-road vehicle use.

Purchasing a Snopass to ride on 12,000 kilometres of designated provincial trails helps Manitoba invest in grooming and maintaining trails, which contribute to snowmobile safety.

Ride safe and enjoy the snowmobile season.

Man charged for sexual relationship with child

By Empire-Advance Staff
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

A report released this week, on Jan. 28, summarizes an investigation that began at Birdtail Sioux First Nation on Sept. 18, 2024. On that day in September, Manitoba First Nations Police (MFNP) received a complaint regarding an adult male involved in a sexual relationship with a young girl.

MFNP Criminal Investigation Unit investigated the allegations and learned that the man was 27 years old, and the victim, a 14-year-old. The accused started a relationship through

messages with the youth. The investigation also revealed, and confirmed, sexual relations occurred between the accused and the victim.

Police executed a search warrant on the adult male's residence where numerous electronic devices were seized. Police also executed a warrant to obtain DNA from the man. The accused was arrested during the execution of the warrants. He will not be named to protect the identity of the victim.

The 27-year-old male from Birdtail Sioux First Nation was arrested and charged with three

counts of sexual assault and sexual interference; luring a child by telephone; and seven counts of breach of prohibition order. The accused was remanded into custody but has since been released by the courts on further conditions.

If you have any information that could assist investigators, please contact MFNPS Birdtail Sioux First Nation Detachment at 204-569-4621 or the MFNPS TIPS line anonymously at 1-833-978-0048, or email TIPS@mfnp.ca. The MFNP TIPS line is monitored regularly.