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Women helping women



EXPRESS PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

From left: Interlake Women's Resource Centre director Jennifer Campbell, Kathy Tomalty, who collected 70 purses and personal care products, and IWRC counsellor Melissa Hornby.

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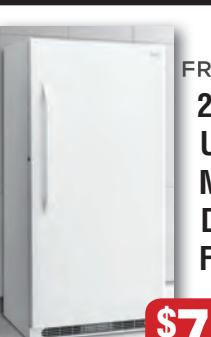
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Purses and care products a boost to Women's Resource Centre

By Patricia Barrett

The efforts of a woman who embarked on a mission to collect purses and personal care products for the Interlake Women's Resource Centre will go a long way to helping women who've fled their homes with few belongings.

Kathy Tomalty, who grew up in Gimli, spent last month collecting 70 new and used purses and hundreds of other items to help women who've had to suddenly leave a relationship.

"Nine years ago, I was in a position where I had three kids and it was tough trying to get a place to live on my own," said Tomalty, who delivered 30 of the purses and hundreds of personal care items to the IWRC on Dec. 18.

"I was lucky because I had family, but just trying to find the time to get my own place to live and looking after my kids was hard. There's a lot of women that don't have support."

The idea to collect purses was sparked by Tomalty's cousin, who told her to advertise on Facebook.

When her co-workers at the Health

Sciences Centre found out about her initiative, they stepped up with donations. Tomalty also noticed that CancerCare patients were knitting toques and she made a \$5 donation per toque so that she could include them along with the personal care products that come as a package with each purse.

"I also went to a couple of the craft sales to provide a drop-off place for people to make donations and bring in purses and goods," said Tomalty. "And people were so, so generous. It was overwhelming. We've got about \$40 worth of product in every purse — and that's not including all the other products for the IWRC's [community] cupboard."

Each purse contains items such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, a toothbrush, dental floss, a hairbrush, tweezers and much-needed feminine hygiene products, which can be cost-prohibitive to women with few resources. Tomalty also included a pair of mitts, socks, a CancerCare toque and a scarf in each purse.

In addition to the generosity of hospital staff and Gimli and area resi-



EXPRESS PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

Each purse is stuffed with personal care products and hand-knitted toques and scarves.

dents, Tomalty said people from as far as Woodlands and Warren donated items.

Tomalty's daughter, Bailey, stepped up to help her mom with the purse drive.

"I'm trying to teach her that giving is so much more rewarding than receiving, and she got on board with me and she's helped with all the packing," said Tomalty.

The IWRC provided almost 300 counselling sessions to 31 clients in its catchment area during the last fiscal year (April 2016 to March 2017). Staff also travel to communities outside the catchment area to provide counselling to women facing a number of barriers, including lack of transportation, finances and child care. The centre is able to distribute a limited number of gas cards to help women attend court hearings or to those anticipating a need to leave their homes and seek refuge in a women's shelter.

About every six days, a women in Canada is killed by her intimate partner, according to Canadian Women's Foundation website. And about 6,000 women and children sleep in shelters on any given night because it isn't safe in their homes.

Violence against women encompasses a range of abusive behaviours including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial.

IWRC's director and counsellor Jennifer Campbell said women often find themselves in situations where they have to leave their homes quickly and don't have time to pack.

"Usually they're fleeing with nothing and they have very little to start with," said Campbell. "These donations will bring up their spirits, especially around this time of year."

She said Tomalty's kindness and hard work will help the centre provide for its clients. The 30 purses — and the 40 yet to be delivered — will be dis-

tributed throughout the new year.

Gimli businesses were especially generous, said Campbell. Pharmasave and Tergesen's donated brand new purses and other items such as socks, sunglasses and wallets. And in the past, Sobeys and Pharmasave have donated personal care products to the centre's community cupboard.

"We'd like to thank all of our generous donors, including our anonymous donors, and Kathy for organizing this," said Campbell, "and all the businesses in Gimli and donors from the Health Sciences Centre."

Social worker and counsellor Melissa Hornby said Tomalty's initiative came as a complete surprise to the Centre, and it will help women and/or their children acquire a bit of normalcy as they transition to a new life.

"When we know there are items we are running low on, we use some of our cash donations to buy them," said Hornby. "We're always in need of shampoo and conditioner, tampons, pads, diapers and formula. If you get a monthly allowance, you'll spend that on groceries rather than on a nice hair conditioner or other things."

Tergesen's, Kaffe Haus and Pharmasave have donation boxes set up until the end of the month for people wishing to make a monetary gift to the IWRC.

In total, Tomalty received 70 purses, 30 of which she was able to pack with products. And she said she'll be embarking on another purse and product drive next October.

"This turned out much better than I ever thought," she said.

The IWRC is always in need of women's personal care products throughout the year. Anyone wishing to donate items can call the centre at 204-642-8264 to find out what particular items the centre is short of and how to deliver them.

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Gimli MLA Jeff Wharton celebrates fish, tourism and collaboration

By Patricia Barrett

Looking back over the achievements and challenges of the past year has Gimli MLA and Minister of Municipal Relations Jeff Wharton at his usual business-minded best.

The former Town of Winnipeg Beach councillor and moving-company entrepreneur said one of the things that will carry him through the challenges of the year ahead is an over-arching "plan."

"You know what they say: If you fail to plan, you plan to fail," he said Dec. 1, the day the Conservative government's new Fisheries Amendment Act came into effect.

Wharton marks Bill 23 as one of his and the government's achievements. The Tories ran on a promise to remove Manitoba from the federal Freshwater Fish Marketing Act in order to provide fishers with other marketing

avenues — and they delivered.

"The fish bill a major achievement, absolutely," said Wharton. "It's going to create lots of opportunities for our fishers not only in Gimli but right across Manitoba. We're looking forward to getting feedback and getting those [fish] plants open. We're really excited. Fishers have been out on social media today. I've seen some tweets and they're pretty excited. That's good news."

There are two fish plants in Gimli that have yet to be completed, and, as far as he understands, Wharton said the new Riverton fish plant has opened for business.

Although he and the government took an enormous amount of flak from fishing communities and First Nations for severing ties with Freshwater, Wharton stands by his decision to help create an open market and



EXPRESS PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFF WHARTON

Gimli MLA Jeff Wharton honoured Gimli High School's varsity girls' basketball team during a private member's statement at the legislature last year. The Gimli Lakers won the MHSAA Provincial AA Girls Basketball Championship.

bring new economic stimulation to the industry.

"There's always a good and a bad, and I'm on record saying there's going to be happy fishing families and there's going to be not-so-happy fishing families," said Wharton. "But the whole thing comes down to choice, and that's what this government ran on and that's what we, along with our partners, are providing. We're really pleased about that."

On the tourism front, Wharton cites

the construction of Phase I of Viking Park in Gimli — for which the province provided \$300,000 — as a wonderful opportunity to attract more tourists to the Interlake and enhance the tourism experience in Gimli.

"We're [the province] continuing to partner with organizers for Phase II," he said. "We're going to continue to develop [the area] around the Viking statue. It's going to be exciting. It'll be

Continued on page 10

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A change of heart

Welcome to more stories and a brand new year, fellow fishers.

I know I said we were done with open water stories until next spring, but this one I think you'll agree is a bit of fun.

It was a sun-bathed, crystal clear, cloudless sky-blue Saturday morning when David Bartmanovich looked out the kitchen window and asked his wife Joan if she wanted to go fishing. Although she hadn't fished all that much, she said sure. They jumped in the truck and headed for the Icelandic River by Riverton.

Dave knew the area well, guiding his truck across a grass field and up to the tall bulrushes that lined the muddy banks of the river. Leaving the truck, they tramped down a patch of reeds to set up chairs, fishing gear and picnic fair. It was a glorious day. The air was still, and though the sun bore down on them, it was comfortably cool in early fall. With baited lines in the water, all was quiet for some time until Joan, who had a sense of humour, picked a woodtick off her arm. "You take me to the nicest places," she kidded Dave as she flicked the tick at him.

With his stocky frame, he sidestepped the incoming tick. He chuckled and then turned serious, gawking at Joan's line as it began straining with great force. "Start reeling in, honey. You've got something big," Dave urged. Joan, having an aggressive nature, did just that. Almost immediately, telltale waves of a fish caught just below the water's surface appeared to come toward her. She started backing up as she reeled in, but what parted the waters and soon lay flapping about in the bank mud stopped her cold. There a

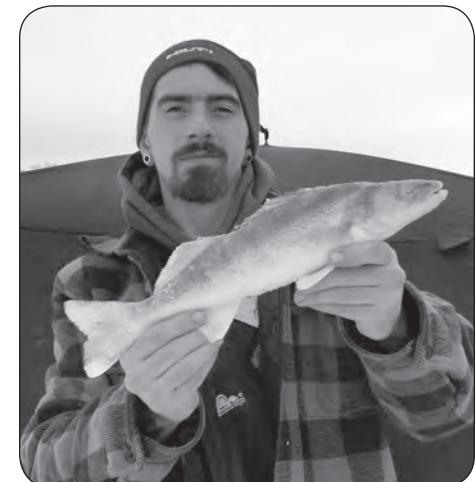
huge, blueish-black, catfish with seemingly glowing eyes glaring at her, slowly flapping its tail from side to side.

She lost it. Joan turned, throwing her rod high in the air, ran for the truck, leaping in and slamming the door shut. She sat there trembling, jumping up and down, clasping her hands together in fright. Dave stood beside the beast laughing at her, his arms outstretched saying, "What are you afraid of?"

"You put that thing back in the water, she shouted at him. Smiling, shaking his head, he pushed the beast back into the muddy water where it slowly sank from sight. In time, things calmed down and Joan came out of the truck, slowly walking, head down, to her chair. Dave busied himself getting out their lunch but couldn't resist teasing her a bit, asking, "Are you ready to start fishing some more?"

It was nice to see the town's people at Grand Marias had made their street-to-ice ramp when I visited there just after Christmas. Quite a few ice anglers had used it and were about a kilometre off shore, so I nosed Old Red down the steep slope and out to a portable shack separate from the others. As I pulled up, the zipper of the shack opened and a chap, perhaps in his 30s with a short dark beard over sharply defined facial features, said, "Hi, how're doing?" We introduced ourselves and our new friend, Paul Weselowski, told me he was from nearby Balsam Bay. I asked why he wasn't fishing there, seeing as how it was the main place to fish on the south end of Lake Winnipeg.

"Have you been there lately?" he asked me. "It's like a zoo with hundreds of guys there. I come here where it's a



EXPRESS PHOTO BY ARNIE WEIDL

Thomas Norquay of Selkirk with one of his catch on the Red River by Selkirk.

little quieter."

A day or so later, I visited with anglers on the Red River by Sugar Island downstream of Selkirk and noticed one portable ice shack with an extraordinary amount of steam coming out of a vent window. I couldn't help but stop and meet whoever was inside. "Hello in there," I called out as I slipped out of the truck. The sound of the zipper door opening came to me and a young lad's face popped out, followed by his tall, thin body, followed by billowing steam. He saw me looking at the cloud and said, "I like it warm inside."

We got to talking and then this Selkirk boy, Thomas Norquay, pointed to two old ice holes a few feet away from his shack saying, "See that? My girlfriend, Cori Simpson from Petersfield, and I had our tent over those holes yesterday and never caught a thing. Today, not more than a few steps from there I'm catching pickerel! One had both hooks in its mouth!"

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Doctor recruitment efforts dominate 2017 for IERHA

By Lindsey Enns

Without a doubt, two of the biggest highlights of 2017 for the Interlake-Eastern Regional (IERHA) was bringing 19 new family doctors to the region as well as the opening of the Selkirk Regional Health Centre.

"We are absolutely thrilled with the work that was done in terms of opening the new hospital on time and on budget. That doesn't happen in health care," IERHA CEO Ron Van Denakker said during an earlier interview with the *Express*. "We've had so many people come through there and the feedback has been tremendous."

"So we had a very successful year,"

Van Denakker added 2017 was a big year when it came to continuing their recruitment efforts to help combat the region's doctor shortage.

"We had just a ton of physician recruitment events over the year, meeting with medical students. We've had recruitment events with our docs. We've met with the residents just to sort of continue to keep the Interlake-Eastern RHA on the road map for an optional place for them to work in the years to come," he said. "That's gone along really well."

But Van Denakker admits that they still have a lot of work to do. He said



EXPRESS PHOTO BY BRETT MITCHELL

Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority (IERHA) CEO Ron Van Denakker tours Selkirk Biz members around the new Selkirk Regional Health Centre in this 2017 photo. Van Denakker said 2017 was "a very successful year" for the IERHA.

they'd like to bring around 30 more doctors to the region.

"The work in relation to recruiting docs very much has to carry on because we still rely very heavily on international medical graduates," he said, adding the IERHA is still working on creating their own residency program. "The evidence is really quite

compelling if you train in the region with a group of docs, there's a good chance you're going to stay there if there's opportunity for you to stay there."

A main part of doctor recruitment efforts also involves the communities within the region, he said.

"(New doctors) want to feel wel-

comed," he said. "The other thing is really the mentorship and partnership with the physician groups in that area so that they have the ability to consult with people. It's really taking the young bucks under their wins."

"Good partnerships retain docs as well."

When it comes to the emergency room closures in Winnipeg, Van Denakker said they are starting to see an increase of patients coming to the region seeking care.

"I do believe that there are people from Winnipeg that are probably now accessing our emergency rooms," he said. "And people from our region who have gone to Winnipeg are now seeking services in Selkirk and that's a good thing."

"We're handling the increased workload but we have to put some focus on making sure we can see people in a timely way."

Looking forward to this year, Van Denakker said the IERHA will be focusing their efforts on mental health and addictions.

"We're going to be working hard on looking at strategies and working with the province on how do we improve in those areas."

Ashern Arena president looking to upgrade ice plant in 2018

By Jeff Ward

An upgrade to the ice plant at the Ashern Arena could happen in 2018 if the arena board can find the funds, but the expensive project isn't the only priority for board members.

Ashern Arena board president Tyler Geisler said that 2017 was a very good year for fundraising initiatives for the arena and he feels that last year was one of the best overall for the revitalization effort.

In 2017, new events raised tens of thousands of dollars for the arena. Ashern Minor Hockey took off and the LED lights that were installed in January 2017 paid dividends. Geisler said the lights are saving the arena \$500 a month in hydro costs, which has validated the investment.

Ashern minor hockey now has a full squirts team, something they didn't have two years ago when the new board took over, and a novice team that has 20 players. League rules prohibit more than 18 players from suiting up, so players have to go on a rotation to make sure everyone can play.

"The response to these programs has been amazing and it's a very exciting time for programming in Ash-

ern," said Geisler.

"I think 2017 is when we really started to see the fruits of our labour in those investments we made and are still making. Hockey numbers are going up, more people are using the arena, and we're bringing in new events."

The rates to rent to ice have also dropped from \$100 an hour to \$50 to encourage more use of the surface.

Geisler said that fundraising events, like the Louis Riel Classic Hockey Tournament, dinner theatre and a baseball tournament on Canada Day at the Ashern Sports Grounds, have all contributed to a great campaign of fundraising.

In 2018, there are many things Geisler wants to accomplish but the big one is a com-

plete renovation and upgrade of the current ice plant. He explained that when their ice plant mechanic activated the machine last year, it cost \$4,300, which was far more than they were expect-

ing.

"He said that the Freon coolant the plant uses is pretty rare these days and that very few plants are using it anymore. He said we could upgrade to a new system that uses a different coolant that is far less expensive," said Geisler.

That upgrade is estimated to cost \$10,000, and Geisler said that he is realistic about how feasible raising that kind of money is.

"If we don't get it done this year, then maybe next year," he said.

The momentum for the Ashern Arena is promising and Geisler said that the feeling he's always wanted to create at the arena is finally starting to come to fruition.

"This is what we have to do for long-term sustainability of the arena. The status quo just means it shuts down. We have to continue on this path to make sure this is a place people want to go to and that it's around for many years," said Geisler.

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Continued growth and economic prosperity ahead for Arborg

By Patricia Barrett

With the start of the new year, Arborg's Mayor Randy Sigurdson is looking forward to leading the town along its continuing path towards economic prosperity and renewal.

"I anticipate that the good and reliable work provided by our community organizations will continue throughout 2018, providing residents with a safe and pleasurable life in Arborg," said Sigurdson.

Council will be focusing on enhancing future growth through a number of projects to promote Arborg as a community that offers a healthy lifestyle, business opportunities and sufficient housing.

Sigurdson said council's 2018 budget discussions will include sidewalk renewal, pavement patching and renewal and purchases of new equipment.

"We were able to do some base work in our recreation centre parking lot in an area that has been deteriorating for some time," he said. "Although we couldn't complete the paving, the base preparation is completed."

Having access to quality water and transportation can help attract new residents to town. Transportation is

one of the areas that has typically been problematic in rural communities across the Interlake.

"We have secured funding towards the purchase of a new handi-van," said Sigurdson, "as well as upgrades to our water treatment plant."

The town was also successful in obtaining federal funding through the Western Canada Diversification Fund for two seasonal pedestrian bridges that were officially opened in June.

The two bridges span the Icelandic River on the east and west sides of town and are an architectural wonder. Swivel Storage Solutions, a local business that specializes in custom-made storage units, made the bridges from pressed aluminum, which dazzle the eye.

It's no secret that Arborg is among one of the strongest community-minded towns in the Interlake. When people want to start a project to benefit the whole town or help raise money for a good cause, they come together and get it done.

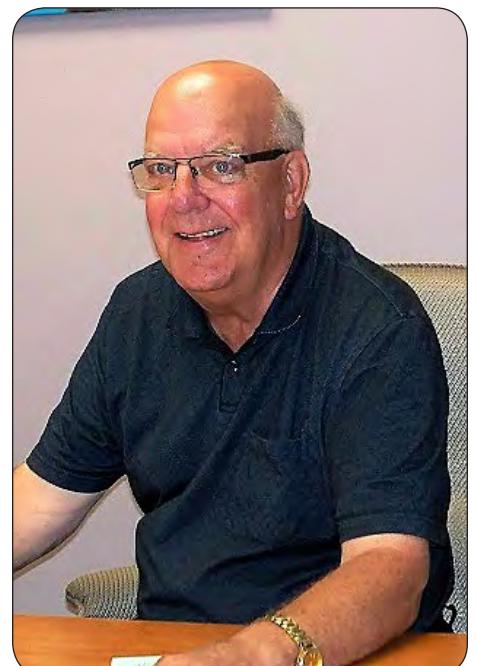
Volunteers stepped up to help renovate the town's Central Interlake Training Facility, for instance, where health-care aide courses and other business training courses are now be-

ing offered in conjunction with Red River College and Ashern's Fieldstone Ventures. And residents and businesses stepped up with generous funding to help construct the state-of-the-art running track at Arborg Collegiate.

Council recognizes the value of co-operation and collaboration as a means to grow the economy, attract new business and operate more efficiently with the funds at hand. To that end, it has started to look at partnerships with the RM of Bifrost-Riverton.

"The councils of Bifrost-Riverton and Arborg have had discussions on having one Community Development Corporation for the entire area. It is felt a more regional vision was necessary to move forward," said Sigurdson. "And we received the completed development plan for Town of Arborg and Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton from our consultants. This will be a useful tool for both municipalities as well as our Community Development Corporation."

Arborg may be ahead of the rural curve as far as housing is concerned. The town offers several housing options for seniors, including an Assisted Living facility, 55-plus apartments



**Arborg Mayor
Randy Sigurdson**

and a 40-bed personal care home.

The town is still waiting for approval from the provincial government to build a new personal care home to meet future care demands and to keep its residents in the community

Continued on page 7

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Thank you to all of our clients for another successful year. We look forward to working with you, our friends and neighbours, as you transition from stage to stage, and house to home in 2018.



Aurora Recovery Centre triples intake of people needing help for addictions

By Patricia Barrett

Since opening its doors about a year and a half ago, the Aurora Recovery Centre has seen an increase in people with addictions turning to them for help.

The private treatment facility, located along the shore of Lake Winnipeg in the RM of Gimli, helps people overcome addictions to alcohol and drugs, as well as other addictions such as gambling. It also addresses mental health issues, including depression, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorders, which are commonly associated with addiction.

"One of the things that's been most successful is the number of members we've been able to treat," said business development and public relations officer Ian Rabb. "We had projections ... and in the first 18 months, we tripled the numbers we thought we would see."

Aurora's detox team, clinical therapists and addiction specialists have treated over 400 people, primarily from Manitoba but many from other parts of Canada.

"One thing that is very unique about the Aurora Recovery Centre is that we do individualized treatment plans. We have had members stay up to 120 days or longer," said Rabb. "We really built our programs based on their addiction history and co-occurring mental health issues."

Rabb said the ability to detox people the moment they're ready to reach out for help has a lot to do with successful rehabilitation.

"We take them in whatever condition they're in, on whatever day and time they need help," said Rabb. "There's no wait times. One of the things I did when I built Aurora was we made sure the detox was large enough and we had enough transitional beds so we'd never have to say no to anybody."

The Health Sciences Centre has a detox for people based on "immedi-

ate health risk," such as a risk of "dying because of alcoholism," he said, but those who wanting to get off substances like opiates have to wait several months to access public treatment programs.

"It would be beneficial of the province to think of a process which would best serve people who need immediate access to treatment — when they need it," said Rabb. "We are the only real medical detox in the province."

Aurora's medical withdrawal unit has 16 beds that are staffed 24-7, 365 days a year. And it has a 54-bed treatment program that provides individualized treatment plans, one-on-one counselling, group therapy, and a relapse prevention and life-skills program. Depending on the extent of an addiction, 30-, 45- and 60-day detox treatments are available.

Rabb said Aurora's continuing-care program is vital to the success of managing addictions post-treatment.

"The longer you keep someone engaged in a recovery conversation, the better off their chances of long-term recovery," he said. "Everybody that comes to Aurora is part of our continuing care family and they have access to their counsellors and a group meeting every week either by internet or phone. If they're far away, we have the ability to bring them into the meeting and participate just like if they were here."

Some of the major challenges the centre has faced are finding specialized staff and funding.

"We're the largest employer in the Interlake. We have about 75 employees and any business that starts up has human resource issues," said Rabb. "So if I had to tell you what our biggest challenge is, it ultimately would be getting and making sure we have the right staff in place."

Rabb said a number of staff members have moved from other parts of Canada to work at Aurora, and they currently have staff that are "incred-



EXPRESS PHOTO COURTESY OF AURORA RECOVERY CENTRE
Lobby of Aurora Recovery Centre,

ibly caring and loving and very dedicated to people with co-occurring mental health issues and addictions."

Another challenge is the high cost of private addictions treatment, which can limit the numbers of people the centre can treat.

"It's a prohibiting factor for people who need help," Rabb agreed. "I get probably 10 calls a day from First Nations communities who don't have access to the funds needed, and we can't treat them. Not everyone can afford a private treatment centre. We have [federal] government funding for Veterans' Affairs [members] and the military, but we haven't been able to secure or get any confirmation from government around funding for First Nations or for people who can't afford treatment."

Aurora's philosophy is to restore hope to those suffering with an addiction.

"We support, guide lead and care for our members but do not enable them or others," said CEO and founder Paul Melnuk in a statement on Aurora's website. "I know from first-hand experience the power of recovery. I have

witnessed hundreds change their lives for the better, restore their families, improve their relationships and become healthy and productive members of their communities."

Some of the centre's clients and former clients are using their personal experience with addictions as a way to give back to the community and raise awareness of addiction.

"One of the great things that came out of Aurora this year is something called the ARC Squad," said Rabb. "The ARC Squad consists of members that are in the treatment centre and our past members. They created a fun run in August and September in Gimli for addictions awareness."

The ARC Squad has also provided meals and other items to homeless people.

Rabb said Aurora will be working on ways of assisting more people who need help with addiction.

"We're not full. Our goal for next year ... is to be as busy as possible because we have the wonderful staff in place to manage that number of members."

> ARBORG, FROM PG. 6

with their loved ones and friends.

"We've made a commitment to support the Arborg & Districts Seniors Housing Corporation's business plan for the construction of a new 80-bed personal care home," said Sigurdson.

Physician care is a major challenge for many rural communities. The Interlake — like other rural regions across the province and across

Canada — suffers from a lack of doctors willing to move to and remain in rural communities. That forces residents to travel long distances for health-care services.

"The physician shortage continues to remain a challenge," said the mayor. "We hear and feel the frustration of residents. We continue to communicate on a regular basis with the CEO of the Interlake-Eastern Re-

gional Health Authority on behalf of our residents to ensure we will have a full complement of physicians and continuing health care."

The town welcomed a new family physician/emergency room doctor earlier this year but is in need of additional doctors to keep the ER operating on a full-time basis. CEO Ron Van Denakker said this fall that it takes about six doctors to keep ERs open 24-7.

The mayor said council will contin-

ue to work as a team to ensure that the best interests of residents and businesses are met.

"Happily, I am fortunate to work with a group of people who function very well as a team," said Sigurdson. "I rarely, if ever, need to make an effort to bring them together on an issue or project. All voices are heard at the table and consensus is found on all matters."

RM of Gimli moves ahead to tackle barriers for people with disabilities

By Patricia Barrett

In compliance with provincial legislation, the RM of Gimli rolled out a draft of its accessibility plan last month to address major barriers to daily living faced by those with disabilities.

In 2013, the former provincial government introduced the Accessibility for Manitobans Act to address barriers to accessibility, promote independent living and set standards with which municipalities and other entities must comply.

The legislation states that "persons disabled by barriers face a wide range of obstacles that prevent them from achieving equal opportunities, independence and full economic and social integration," and that achieving accessibility "will improve the health, independence and well-being of persons disabled by barriers."

The law applies to persons or organizations that employ people, offer accommodation, own or operate a facility or public transportation and provide goods and services. Private residences are excluded.

Municipalities with populations under 10,000 are required to have an accessibility plan in place by Dec. 31. To that end, the RM created an Accessibility Committee, composed of Chris Hornby, manager of parks and recreation services, Brittany Isfeld, economic development and tourism clerk, and members of the Gimli Age Friendly Committee.

"Ultimately, the legislation says that we want to provide service to everybody that could possibly want it and that we'll do our best to accommodate their needs," said Hornby. "It's an ongoing process, and we'll update the plan every couple of months."

Municipalities have until 2023 to

"SOME OF THESE ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES MAY NOT BE FEASIBLE FOR US, ESPECIALLY TRYING TO GET RAMPS OR ELEVATORS OR LIFTS INTO BUILDINGS."

ing minutes and other documents are produced can pose a problem to people with impaired sight.

"The PDF format doesn't work with accessibility computer programs, and for somebody who has vision problems, it's difficult for a program to take a PDF and make the text bigger," said Hornby. "We have to be able to provide some of these things in multiple formats."

Barriers in the built environment include access to the recreation centre's ice surface, where curling events and graduation celebrations are held. The facility does not have ramps leading to the playing surface.

"It was never considered when we built it ... but it impacts people want-

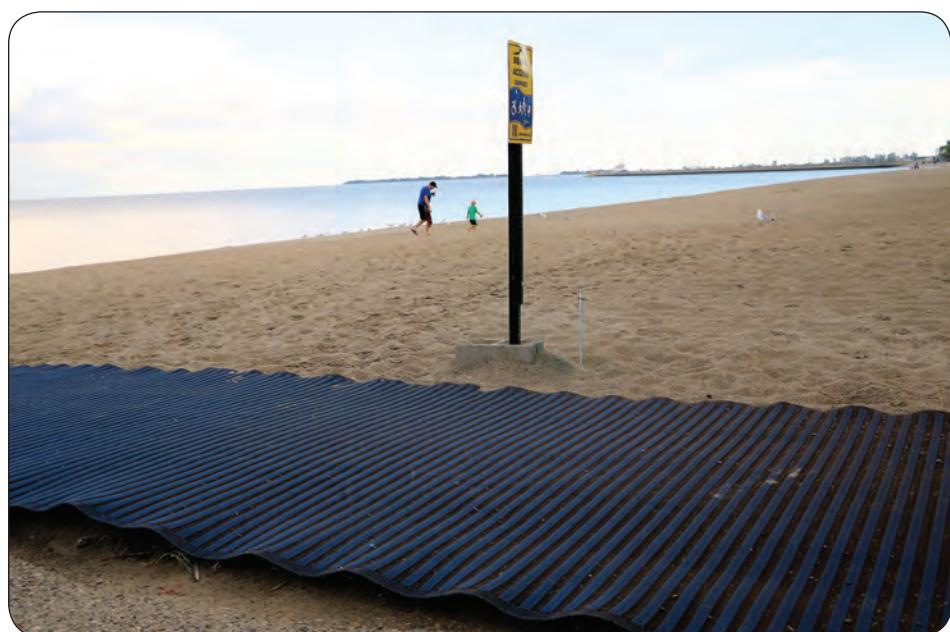
ture, like roads and drainage, are coming along like he expected. He'd love for this to move quicker but explained that things are progressing in the right direction.

One of the big successes for Coldwell in 2017 came in the form of grants

achieve accessibility in five major areas: customer service, information and communication, transportation, employment and the built environment. Barriers are defined as physical, architectural, informational, attitudinal or technological.

"It's a phased-in process," said Hornby. "The first one is the customer service standard. Anybody who wants services from an organization should be able to receive those services. Some places, we've been told, don't allow staff to assist with filling out forms and things like that. We've always encouraged that, as far as I can tell. If somebody needs assistance doing this, and they ask for assistance, then by all means the front-line person is empowered to take on that role and make sure everybody gets the service they need."

The Accessibility Committee has already identified a number of barriers in each of the five key areas. Those include doors without automatic openers, the height of service desks, inaccessible picnic tables and benches on Gimli Beach and inaccessible washrooms at the sports park. And the



EXPRESS PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

Mobi mats are rolled out each summer on Gimli Beach to provide lakeside access to wheelchairs, strollers and kayaks.

ing to use the facility on an equal footing," said Hornby. "The biggest concern every year is the grad celebration. We always have a couple of grandparents and relatives that have mobility issues or who are wheelchair-bound and they can't come through the front door because they can't get onto the ice surface. What we've done in the past to accommodate those people is open up the back half of the rec centre where we bring the Zamboni in and out."

The RM has already taken a number of steps to address issues that can make life difficult for those with disabilities.

It provides ramps and automated doors at most facilities, provides parking spots close to the entrances of major public buildings, empowers staff to assist residents and visitors wanting to access programs and services, and purchased Mobi mats for the beach so that people in wheelchairs or those with strollers and kayaks can get to the water's edge.

Not every accessibility barrier will be easily solved, especially when it comes to buildings designed decades ago, and the committee will have to come up with alternative ways to provide access.

"Some of these accessibility issues may not be feasible for us, especially trying to get ramps or elevators or lifts into buildings," said Hornby. "By all means, this is not a Gimli problem but a building problem across the entire province. Some communities won't be able to do it and will have to figure out other ways to accommodate people."

The funds required to make certain upgrades will likely be a limiting factor as to what can be achieved.

"There's no funding attached to this legislation and no new programs or additional supports for it," said Hornby. "The province did offer workshops on how the legislation will come into effect and what they're looking for. But council will have to ask for funding."

Some existing grant programs, such as Community Places and Hometown Manitoba, could be tapped for disability upgrades, but Hornby said some projects may be "cost-prohibitive" to implement.

The accessibility plan will be posted on the RM's website and updated regularly as new barriers are identified and addressed.

Coldwell reeve looks back on 2017, eyes challenges for 2018

By Jeff Ward

Coldwell Reeve Brian Sigfusson is looking back on what he believes was a successful 2017 for his municipality and is already looking at having a prosperous 2018.

Sigfusson said that rural infrastruc-

ture, like roads and drainage, are coming along like he expected. He'd love for this to move quicker but explained that things are progressing in the right direction.

and raise money for the cause.

"I'm quite happy. I think the public has been very supportive and I'm proud of them," said Sigfusson of the arena effort.

Continued on page 9

Airships, affordable housing and wellness on Gimli mayor's 2018 radar

By Patricia Barrett

If there's one thing the mayor of Gimli is best known for, it's big-picture thinking when it comes to exploring options for bettering the municipality.

Just before Christmas, Randy Woroniuk spoke of the major challenges facing the municipality and his vision of the future, which includes affordable housing, opportunities for enhanced recreation and clean transportation in the form of airships.

"I can envision Gimli being an airship station to supply northern Manitoba," said the mayor. "People laugh, but mark my words. We're talking about a carbon tax coming into this province and here we are taking trains off the tracks and putting more trucks on the road. That's going to fuel more climate change. We have the ability for cleaner technology and we need venture capitalists and government to start investing in airship technology."

The mayor said he's been in touch with University of Manitoba engineering professor Barry Prentice, who developed a prototype airship as a low-cost means of transporting freight to isolated northern communities. With climate change, ice roads and other routes to northern communities are becoming less dependable than they used to be.

A potential drawback to airships could be their ability to fly in extremely cold weather, but the mayor can see Gimli supporting a cold-weather testing facility.

"Gimli is poised, in my mind, to be part of that. And we can be a terminal for the north. There's no excuse to not be doing this."

With his thoughts turned to ground level, the mayor is optimistic about the future of Gimli, especially in the tourism sector and the town's ability to attract visitors from around the world.

"In the last few years, I sense a growing vibrancy in Gimli with our business community and with visitors," said the mayor, who was instrumental in a getting a new chamber of commerce up and running. "We've got a new [tourism] branding model coming out and we're going to be focusing on the winter season."

One facility that could potentially draw more tourists to town is the outdoor aquatic centre that's slated to open this summer.

With most projects council has embarked on, there has been public outcry from a small minority of naysayers. But the mayor is "confident" people will use the pool and that it will be an income-generator rather than an expense.

Part of the reason council embarked on the project was to find alternatives for recreation when Lake Winnipeg is experiencing algae blooms.

"We are seeing more incidents of algae blooms," said the mayor. "Every year since zebra mussels

have come into Lake Winnipeg, the water's becoming clearer and clearer and that's going to result in larger and more extensive algae blooms. So why not be proactive? During these periods, people will still have a place to swim."

The town will be offering swimming and possibly scuba-diving lessons, hosting swim meets and renting the pool out for birthday parties and other special events.

Woroniuk said some of the major challenges facing Gimli right now is a lack of affordable housing. The resort town has a number of condominium units, but those are off limits to people earning less-than-average salaries, younger families or those on fixed incomes.

Although Gimli has the highest proportion of seniors aged 65 and older in the province, it lacks seniors' housing. Woroniuk says the municipality can't afford to build public housing on its own and it can't rely on the government for financial assistance.

"So far, we haven't had any type of buy-in to that," he said. "Senior government needs to help us, but it doesn't seem to be on their radar at this point. We keep talking about it, but it doesn't manifest as anything and that's frustrating."

Woroniuk said he's been encouraging the private sector to invest in affordable housing.

"There's a demand for it. What we're seeing is seniors leaving our community and moving to Winnipeg. If we had an assisted living type of development, we could keep seniors in our community longer. When these people leave our community, they're not just physically leaving, they're also taking their bank accounts with them and our local businesses are losing out."

Woroniuk said there may be other ways to meet the housing demand. Tiny houses, for instance, could help with affordability issues, but they'd have to be situated outside town limits as current bylaws don't allow the standalone dwellings in town.

Another challenge facing council is obtaining funding for its proposed \$12-million Wellness Centre. The former provincial government had committed \$4 million to the project, but the new government has yet to state its support.

"No one's said we've lost the money. And we haven't heard from the feds. We can't do this alone," said Woroniuk. "I would like to see the private sector come forward and have a partnership with us. We shouldn't expect government to do everything for us."

The indoor walking track would encourage physical activity during the winter months and help reduce health-care costs.

"We're the oldest community in the province. We



EXPRESS PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT
Gimli mayor Randy Woroniuk

suffer through six months of a harsh winter where we're all locked in our homes. I know there's a lot of people driving to Winnipeg to Seven Oaks or to the Refit Centre to walk because their doctors say they have to walk. Why are we doing that? Our people should be staying here. Let's work together to get this done. Does everything have to be profit-driven?"

As far as developments in the new year are concerned, Woroniuk said the RM will be considering alternatives to the boathouse the federal government wants to build at the harbour. Although much valued by the community, the Coast Guard was subjected to tremendous opposition from those who want to see a more tourist-friendly harbour front.

"The harbour authority spends millions of dollars doing our harbour for the fishers and for the Yacht Club," said the mayor. "They maintain the slips and they did the south parking lot. They're looking at putting a new boat launch on the south end and putting more slips in there. They take care of the ongoing maintenance and it doesn't cost the RM a cent. It's very limited as to what can be done on the waterfront because the municipality doesn't own it."

Council has already met with primary stakeholders and will be holding community consultations in the upcoming months.

"I believe that you should only be there so long and that people will rise to the occasion," said Sigfusson.

He said that if someone else were to run and become reeve, he would want it to be someone who has the best interest for the whole community in mind and someone who will work with neighbouring communities to strengthen the Interlake as a whole.

> COLDWELL, FROM PG. 10

The reeve said that one of his main concerns in 2018 is the future of Lundar's ambulance bay, which the province has said will close in favour of a new building being constructed in Eriksdale. Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living, Kelvin Goertzen said back in July of last year that this new system would mean a better response time. Sigfusson isn't convinced though and said that he is going to make sure his voice, and the voice of his community is heard by the government.

"It's quite important, I'm totally against moving anything, I'm more in favour of making something worth while," he said.

Sigfusson, who is on the final year of his third term as reeve, said that while he has thought a little bit about running in the upcoming election, he isn't sure what he will do at this point. He said that he believes there are others that might want to step forward and take a swing at being reeve and doesn't want to get in the way of another member of the community rising up.

Grahamdale's reeve reflects on a busy 2017

By Jeff Ward

There were a lot of important changes to the RM of Grahamdale in 2017 and Reeve Clifford Halaburda is looking to 2018 to bring resolutions for many of these big issues.

Grahamdale is losing some tax base through multiple land acquisitions in 2018. Neighbouring First Nation communities are converting land to reserve status to rebuild their homes. The eventual construction of the Lake Manitoba Outlet Channel will reduce the tax base as well. These issues, Halaburda said, have been known for some time, and while the final decisions on the channel alignment are

still to be made, Halaburda hopes the province will do the right thing and compensate Grahamdale for its losses. He said that he is personally torn between wanting the outlet channel to be built to protect his community from flooding and the fact that it takes some revenue away from the municipality.

"It's going to affect us in the long run, losing our tax base on this land," said Halaburda.

"But we need the channel. Everyone knows that. The province said that we can even turn the channel into an irrigation operation for farmers if we run into a drier season."

Halaburda explained that in 2017 there were many projects that he was happy to see completed in his RM. The cleaning of municipal drains and ditches, the Moosehorn flood protection project and road repairs were all on that list.

His attention in 2018 is on preparing for how the future outlet channel will affect Grahamdale, as well as continuing the regular maintenance of roads and infrastructure.

"We're getting into the year where we're sort of catching up with our big drainage problems," said the reeve. "Our roads are in good shape, so that's also a plus. And what I mean is

that, little by little, it's all coming together."

Grahamdale is a geographically large municipality, and Halaburda explained that it's always a challenge to keep on top of the numerous priorities he and council set each year.

It's an election year in 2018, and Halaburda said it's a bit too premature to say right now if he is considering running for re-election. "I'd certainly like to continue because there are some interesting things coming up I want to see through, like land acquisition and the channel. I've got until October to think about it, but I can't guarantee anything right now," said Halaburda.

> JEFF WHARTON, FROM PG. 3

a nice area down there."

The past year has not been without its challenges, and Wharton took on new responsibilities when he was appointed Minister of Municipal Relations in August.

"Some of the challenges in my role as MLA have been ensuring we have balance and that I can maintain the communication that I really strive for," he said. "I've talked [in the past] about communication and the importance of it — that's been a challenge, obviously, with my new role as minister. But even as an MLA, you certainly have a lot of balls in the air, so to speak, and it's a challenge to ensure you can keep well dialed in. So far so good, but it's something we need to keep focused on."

Another challenge is simply finding the time to do everything that needs to be accomplished when one takes on an additional portfolio.

"There are time constraints on my job, essentially with going from a 45- to 50-hour week to a 70-hour week. One day rolls into another," he said. "That's certainly what we signed up

for, and there's no complaints."

He credits his wife Marielle for helping him through some difficult and challenging times.

"First of all, you can't deal with [issues] without partnerships. No. 1 is my wife. She's helped me through the challenges," he said. "No. 2, a great CA [constituency assistant] and support from my staff in Gimli. Tammy [Axelson] and my staff have been fabulous. And lastly, my staff here at the legislature. That's my support network. They've helped me deal with the challenges."

He "dove" right into the Municipal Relations portfolio and said municipalities will benefit from a number of new bills the government introduced.

"One of the areas we're really pleased with is Bill 30, the Vehicles for Hire or the ride-share companies. We're really excited about that," he said. "Now every municipality has the opportunity to bring in ride-share companies, write their own bylaws and ensure their bylaws focus on the needs of their constituents."

"A single window, a one-stop shop,

is another. It's an excellent opportunity for municipalities to access government programs through a single window instead of having to deal with several departments. And there's 'basket funding' they can pull from to [create] development in their communities. They can apply the money themselves — we're not telling them what to do."

Wharton said one of the most exciting parts of his ministerial role is working with Manitoba's 137 municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg.

"Our carbon plan and cannabis are two areas where we're working with our partners on moving forward," he said. "Because of some of the constraints and timeframes the federal government has imposed, we're actively engaging our municipalities ... There are a lot of unknowns, so we're really pleased to get the input provided by our RMs and move forward with good policy."

As for a promise to reduce red tape that "RMs and Manitobans in general have asked for," Wharton said there are over 900,000 regulations on the books. He said he won't be able

to dispense straightaway with all the redundancies and unnecessary hoops municipalities and businesses have to jump through, but he's "working on it."

As for the future, Wharton said he'll continue to focus on creating tourism opportunities for all parts of the Gimli riding, including Riverton, Hecla, Winnipeg Beach and St. Andrews.

"There's new funding we announced last year ... that's predictable," he said. "Tourism hasn't had that predictable funding and it's been difficult over the years for them to continue to try to market Winnipeg and Manitoba."

He'll also strive to ensure potential fish plant operators "continue to look to the Gimli riding as a great place to set up shop."

Affordable housing is another area he'll be keeping a close eye on in 2018.

"It's something I'm passionate about for the Gimli riding, and we're still working with our partners and stakeholders in the community and looking at private investment," he said. "Gimli's open for business. We'll continue to work with our mayors and reeves, who are our grassroots of politics."



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Put learning on your list of New Year's resolutions

Submitted

This year, make a resolution for life-long learning with these literacy tips from ABC Life Literacy Canada:

- Take a course or upgrade your skills. People with higher literacy skills earn more income, are less likely to be unemployed and are more likely to find full-time work. To find help with reading, writing and math, visit www.LookUnderLearn.ca.
- Read aloud together, no matter how old you are. Reading ability is like a muscle — if you don't exercise it often, you may not be able to maintain the same level of reading ability as you age. Encourage all family members to read and discuss items from newspapers and websites to keep up to date on what is happening around the world.
- Exercise your mind. Challenge yourself by doing the daily crossword or Sudoku puzzle.
- Write on. Keep a journal to express your thoughts and help polish your writing skills. Or send a handwritten

letter or thank you note to a friend, family member or co-worker.

- Be a mentor. Offer to proofread homework or verify math answers after your child has done the work.
 - Give the gift of words. Need inspiration for birthday, wedding or anniversary gifts this year? Why not give magazine subscriptions, books or make a donation to a literacy organization in your community?
 - Start a book club. Spend time with some of your favourite people talking about some of your favourite characters. Go online for tips on how to get started.
 - Participate in Family Literacy Day®. On Jan. 27, thousands of Canadians will take part in Family Literacy Day events in schools, libraries, literacy organizations and homes across the country. Find out how to join in at www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca.
- For more fun literacy tips and activities to help you keep your skills sharp year-round, visit www.FamilyLiteracyDay.ca.



EXPRESS PHOTO BY JO-ANNE PROCTER

Brooks Harris is exercising his brain reading the Tribune. Family Literacy Day is Jan. 27 and readers are encouraged to make literacy part of their daily routine.

West Interlake looking at lagoon, waste transfer site upgrades for 2018

By Jeff Ward

The outgoing year for the RM of West Interlake was a busy one, according to Reeve Randy Helgason, and with a few big infrastructure projects on the horizon, 2018 will be no different.

Helgason said routine road work, ditch cleaning and graveling along municipal roads were among many of the projects accomplished last year. The addition of the transportation committee in 2015 has made for a much more efficient strategy on prioritizing which roads are worked on.

Looking ahead to 2018, he said the lagoon expansion and the waste transfer site upgrades are two of the big priorities for council. With changing government regulations, Helgason said those projects have to be completed to comply. He explained the hookups connecting Ashern's curling rink, arena and Centennial Hall to the town's water supply are also big priorities.

"There are things we need, like a new fire hall in Ashern, and I'd love to be able to do that but you have to prioritize certain things first," said Helgason. "You can only put so much on your ratepayers. In terms of land mass, we're huge, but pop-

ulation-wise, we're not."

Helgason also faced challenging health issues in 2017, as he is still suffering from the effects of a stroke he had last year. He said that he's not a person that gives up easily but admitted it had been a tough year for him personally.

And 2017 marked the third year since the amalgamation of the former RMs of Eriksdale and Siglunes, and Helgason said it's been the best year yet. He explained it's clearer now than ever before that this amalgamation is for good, whether people like it or not.

"We were helpless to change anything and to make any adjustments, and the way it went was not the way people wanted it to be," said the reeve.

Those issues are now a small dot in the rearview mirror of council, who Helgason said are working well together for the greater good.

Heading into an election year, Helgason isn't ready to commit a bid for re-election and says it's still too early to make that decision. He did say he loves his job and there are still things he'd like to accomplish, but he hadn't given the 2018 election much thought at all.

Lundar Arena walls have risen



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY KEN ERICKSON

The exterior walls for the shell of the Lundar Arena started to shoot up a few weeks ago and signal a new beginning for Coldwell residents. After a few delays, construction is now underway on the long-awaited revival of the Lundar Arena. Once the exterior shell is complete, the interior construction can be done. The building's design incorporates much of existing infrastructure of the pool and curling rink that flank the new shell. Once the walls are complete, the rafters and roof will come next. Back in December, Grant Sifusson, president of Lundar Grettir Coop Inc., explained that if everything goes well, the new facility should be open for skating come fall.

January will host two full moons in 2018

By Ted Bronson

Ted has been involved in astronomy and associated sciences since childhood. His first observation was a total eclipse of the moon on December 18, 1964. That event stimulated his interest in the heavens ever since.

This year, January hosts two full moons.

The first full moon occurs on Jan. 1. The moon at this time will appear a bit larger than usual as it is close to perigee (its nearest point in its orbit around the Earth). The second full moon occurs on Jan. 31. This moon is sometimes referred to as a Blue Moon. This case will leave the month of February with no full moon as it is a short month this year.

Since the moon requires about 29.5 days to go through all its phases, it is possible for February to lack a full moon. The last time this occurred was February 1999. This makes it possible for March (which has 31 days) to have two full moons this year.

It has been just over two years since the moon has passed through the Earth's umbral (inner) shadow cone to produce a total eclipse of the moon.

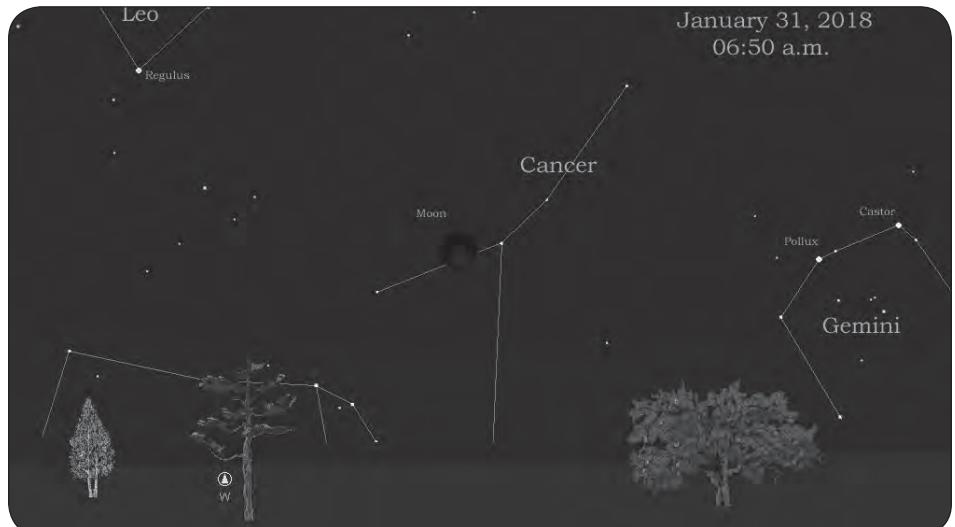


Total eclipse of the moon, Sept. 27, 2015.

That occurred on Sept. 27, 2015.

On the night of Jan. 30/31, the brilliance of the full moon will fade once again as it passes through the dark shadow of the Earth. Only part of this event will be visible from our area. The moon will pass through the Earth's shadow in the constellation of Cancer. If the skies are clear that night it will undoubtedly be cold so bundle up to keep warm.

The eclipse will start very early in the morning at 4:51 a.m. CST (Central Standard Time), with the full moon entering the Earth's outer shadow



January 31, 2018
06:50 a.m.

EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Western horizon, Jan. 31 at 6:50 a.m.

cone (penumbra). At this time, the moon will be about 29 degrees above the western horizon as seen from the Winnipeg area. An observer must look very close to detect the near imperceptible light gray shading of the penumbral shadow as it creeps across the lunar surface over the next 58 minutes. As the moon moves easterly in its orbit around the Earth, it will intercept the Earth's inner shadow cone

(umbra) at 5:48 a.m. CST. It will be at this point when the partial phase of the eclipse begins. You will easily see the dark umbral shadow make its way across the moon's surface. The moon continues to move deeper into the inner shadow cone until 6:51 a.m. CST, at which time totality begins. This is the time when the total lunar eclipse

Continued on page 14

get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



Servings: 10
1 package McCormick Original Taco Seasoning Mix, divided
2 tablespoons butter
1 cup finely chopped onion
2 cups shredded, cooked turkey
1 can (15 1/4 ounces) whole-kernel corn, drained
1 can (10 ounces) diced tomatoes and chilies, drained
1 garlic clove, minced
1 container (8 ounces) whipped cream cheese
2 cups shredded cheddar cheese,

Leftover Turkey Taco Crescent Ring

divided
2 packages (8 ounces each) refrigerated crescent dinner rolls
Heat oven to 375 F. Reserve 1 teaspoon taco seasoning mix in small bowl; set aside.

In medium saucepan over medium heat, melt butter. Add onion; cook and stir 3 minutes, or until tender. Add turkey, corn, tomatoes, garlic and remaining seasoning mix. Cook and stir 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in cream cheese and 1 cup shredded cheese.

Unroll crescent roll dough on greased or parchment paper-lined baking pan. Separate into triangles. Arrange triangles to resemble sun with center open. Press dough where bottoms of triangles overlap. Spoon turkey mixture in ring where dough

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 1 hour
Servings: 8
1/4 cup cornstarch
1/4 cup sugar
2 teaspoons McCormick Minced Onions
1 1/2 teaspoons McCormick Ground Mustard
1 teaspoon McCormick Gourmet Sicilian Sea Salt
1/4 teaspoon McCormick Chipotle

overlaps. Fold triangle points over filling, tucking into bottom layer to secure. Continue until entire ring is enclosed.
Bake 15 minutes, or until golden brown.
In bowl, stir remaining shredded

Chipotle Corn Pudding

Chili Pepper
4 eggs
1/2 cup milk
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter, melted
2 cans (14 3/4 ounces each) creamed corn
1 can (15 1/4 ounces) whole-kernel corn, drained

nonstick cooking spray
Heat oven to 400 F. In small bowl, mix cornstarch, sugar, onions, mustard, sea salt and chili pepper until well blended; set aside.

In large bowl, lightly beat eggs. Stir in milk, butter and all corn. Gently stir in cornstarch mixture until well blended. Pour into 2 1/2-quart baking dish sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.

Bake 1 hour, or until set, stirring halfway through cooking. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

cheese into reserved seasoning mix. Remove ring from oven. Sprinkle with cheese mixture. Bake 5 minutes longer, or until cheese is melted. Serve with desired toppings, such as shredded lettuce, sour cream or guacamole.

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Bison women's hockey team No. 1 in Canada

By Brian Bowman

For the first time in Bison women's hockey history, Manitoba is ranked No. 1 in Canada in the latest U SPORTS Top 10 poll.

Manitoba vaulted from the fourth spot all the way to No. 1 after a home weekend split with UBC on Dec. 1-2.

Winnipeg Beach's Rachel Dyck was in goal for the Bison as they skated to a 2-1 overtime win over UBC in Game 2 of the series.

"It's obviously pretty cool (being No. 1) and it was obviously a goal for us all going in but we didn't really expect it," said Dyck, who now has a 6-2 record this season.

"We're just going one game at a time and we keep on winning."

The Bisons lead the Canada West conference with a 10-4-2-0 record (good for 34 points as three points are awarded for a regulation win).

A big part of Manitoba's success has been the play of the Interlake players on the roster.

Besides Dyck, Manitoba also has Stonewall forward Allison Sexton, Warren forward Mekaela Fisher and Stonewall goalie Devan Johnson on its team this season.

It's says a lot about the opportunities for Interlake girls to play elite hockey while growing up. That's not always the case in rural areas across Canada.

"It's pretty cool to play with girls that grew up in the same area," Dyck said. "For me, right off the bat when I started when I was 12, I had the opportunity right away to play with other girls on a girls' team. That's kind of rare because a lot of girls grow up playing with guys."

Dyck said Interlake girls were part of a very good hockey program growing up. They had a lot of exposure playing

in U.S. tournaments and across Canada in front of scouts, she said.

"All of the coaches growing up were great," she noted. "It was a good environment and a good organization that allowed us to (enhance) our skills and it obviously has paid off."

The Bisons enjoyed a lengthy holiday break and will resume Canada West action against the No. 2 Alberta Pandas this Friday and Saturday in Edmonton.

It will be an epic showdown between the two top teams in the country.

"Going to Alberta has been tough for us," Dyck admitted. "Every year we go to the playoffs, we've had to go there and play them and we haven't had much success."

"If we get some good results (against Alberta), then that will definitely boost our confidence."



Rachel Dyck

MPI's top 5 road safety resolutions for 2018

Submitted

How many road crash deaths are okay? Manitoba Public Insurance is encouraging all motorists to conclude that losing even one Manitoban from motor vehicle collisions is one too many — and is encouraging motorists to resolve to make 2018 the safest-ever year on Manitoba roadways. On that note, Manitoba's public auto insurer has released its Top 5 road safety resolutions for motorists to consider:

1. Drive Sober

The use of either alcohol or drugs while driving is a dangerous mix. Many drivers believe cannabis has no effect on their driving ability. MPI's public awareness and education efforts over the next year will give Manitobans the information they need to make safe decisions when it comes to driving after consuming cannabis and to understand how, similar to alcohol, cannabis and other drugs can impair driving ability.

On average, every year 25 people are killed in an impaired-driving related collisions, and a recent medical study published by the British Medical Journal shows that crash rates for drivers under the influence of cannabis are two to six times higher than for drivers who are not impaired.

Don't become a statistic!

2. Stick to driving: distracted driving can be fatal

Each year in Manitoba, about 28 people are killed as a result of distracted driving. A recent survey of Manitoba drivers revealed that 15 per cent of respondents admitted to using a handheld cellphone while driving, with usage nearly doubling among drivers age 25 to 39.

However, distracted driving is not exclusive to the use of smart phones while driving. Distracted driving is anything that diverts your attention from the road. Distractions take your eyes off the road, hands off the wheel and your mind off the job of driving.

Stay focused on the task of driving!

3) Buckle up. Every time.

On average, 20 people each year are killed in Manitoba because they were not wearing a seatbelt. Consider the odds: A person is nearly 35 times more likely to be killed and five times more likely to be seriously injured when not wearing a seatbelt. In rural Manitoba, highway speeds increase crash severity, which makes wearing seatbelts even more important, regardless of where you are seated in the vehicle.

Whether a short trip or a long one — seat belts save lives!

4. Watch your speed

Speeding claims about 21 lives yearly in Manitoba, in addition to 600 people injured in speed-related crashes. Weather conditions in Manitoba can also make driving treacherous.

At this time of year, all drivers should be in full "winter driving mode." Be particularly cautious when travelling on overpasses and bridges.

The surfaces on these structures can freeze quickly due to a lack of ground insulation. Allow more time to stop. Traction is reduced when roads are slippery it takes more time to come to a complete stop. If you don't have winter tires, it's not too late to get them.

Drive to road conditions. Speed limits are intended for "ideal" driving conditions!

5. Watch out for vulnerable road users: motorcycles, pedestrians and cyclists

Over the first 11 months of 2017, seven motorcyclists and 11 pedestrians lost their lives in motor vehicle-related collisions on public roadways. As our most vulnerable road users, drivers are encouraged to look twice and give the time and space needed to keep pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists safe. For cyclists, this means giving at least one metre of space when passing.

Our roadways belong to all road users!

Interlake writer moves to Ukraine to study dance, culture

Kaitlin Vitt is a writer from St. Andrews who has been a Ukrainian dancer for 19 years and an instructor for five years. In 2010, she joined Troyanda Ukrainian Dance Ensemble based in Selkirk. Since then, her group has travelled and performed in Canada, Croatia, Hungary, Austria and this year she has spent months studying dance and culture in Ukraine. Below is Kaitlin's first-person account of her journey through Ukraine so far.

By Kaitlin Vitt

Thousands of people packed up their lives to immigrate to Canada for a new start during the first wave of Ukrainian immigration 126 years ago. Today people still make the journey to begin their new lives.

I did the opposite. In August, I moved to the home of my ancestors for 11 months to study Ukrainian dance, language and culture.

I'm here with six other Canadians as part of Cobblestone Freeway Tours and Ukrainian Dance World's inaugural dance immersion program. I started the journey with my dance group, Selkirk's Troyanda Ukrainian Dance Ensemble, touring around Ukraine for two weeks. Now, as part of the immersion program, I'm living in a new city every two months training with dance groups in each city.

Ukraine isn't at the top of everyone's travel list, some perhaps thinking not much has changed since Soviet times or that the fighting in the east is country wide.

I first visited Ukraine in 2014. In 2013, former president Viktor Yanukovych backed out of a Ukraine-European Union agreement and people protested in Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, leading to the Euromaidan Revolution. After calls for his resignation, Yanukovych eventually fled to Russia, but protests against the government continued.

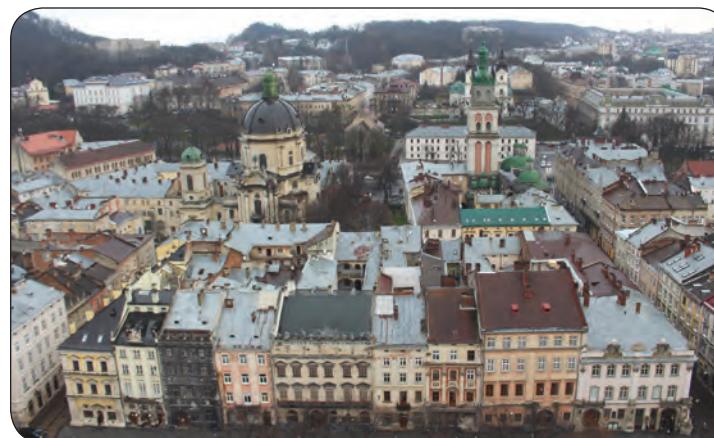
Even though it was a short time after the protests started, I felt safe when I visited in 2014, and the same goes for today.

But sometimes it is still evident that I'm in a country with political unrest. A week into my time in Kyiv, a car-bomb exploded, killing one person. It was a targeted attack, but it happened during rush hour on a popular route



PHOTOS COURTESY OF EVGANY KRAWS AND EXPRESS PHOTOS BY KAITLIN VITT

Above left: Kaitlin Vitt of St. Andrews, pictured centre, performs at the Lviv opera house with Troyanda Ukrainian Dance Ensemble in August 2017 as part of the International Ukrainian Dance and Culture Festival. Above right: The Trade Unions Building in Kyiv, now covered with the Freedom is Our Religion banner, was fire damaged during the Euromaidan Revolution. Below left: Visitors can climb 400 stairs up to the top of Lviv's city hall for a birds-eye view. Below right: Hundreds of people demanding political reform protest outside the parliament building in Kyiv on Oct. 19.



so anyone could have been affected.

Then in mid-October, protestors camped outside the parliament building in Kyiv in what the Kyiv Post called the biggest demonstration since Euromaidan. Two days earlier, I went for a walk in the same area, but instead of Ukrainian national guards and hundreds of protestors, I saw families and musicians spending time in the warm fall weather.

The fighting in the east is ongoing. Though it's concentrated in certain areas of the country, like Donbas and Crimea, every day I read about the latest happenings and can't help but feel connected since it's happening on

the same soil I live on today.

During the immersion program so far, I've lived in Kyiv and Lviv. I will also live in Chernivtsi and Lutsk.

Living in Ukraine is a dream for me, but I understand locals don't always feel the same way about their country — though I'm looking for any reason to stay, they may be looking for opportunities to leave.

The minimum wage is \$150 Canadian per month, and though some goods such as groceries are considerably cheaper than in North America, talking with a few locals, \$150 can be barely enough to get by.

So why would I ever want to stay?

Perhaps it's part of the "you want what you don't have" mentality.

I see the problems with Ukraine, but living here also makes me aware of problems within my own country — the desire to own the biggest home, the need for the most expensive cell phone, and the lack of quality food (which I didn't realize was a problem until I tasted Ukraine-made food).

I still have lots to experience and learn here — including the language, which is very slowly happening.

For more information about my travels, visit the Facebook page "Our Year in Ukraine" or check out my personal blog, kaitlinvitt.com/ukraine.

> TWO FULL MOONS, FROM PG. 12

is most spectacular.

The moon will take on a coppery red-orange colour at this time. This colour is due to the refraction of sunlight through the atmosphere into the umbral shadow cone. The brightness and colour of the moon at this point gives a good indication of Earth's atmospheric condition. If the totally eclipsed moon has a bright orange or

yellow colour then the atmosphere is mostly clear and contains little pollution such as dust, smoke, aerosols and few thunderstorms. However if the moon is a dark orange, deep red or nearly invisible, then the Earth's atmosphere will not pass much sunlight into the shadow cone, meaning that it contains higher concentrations of contaminants along with a lot of

thunderstorms.

Mid-eclipse occurs at 7:30 a.m. CST being the point at which the lunar disc is deepest within the Earth's umbral shadow. At this time, the moon will be only five degrees above the west-southwestern horizon as seen from our area.

The moon will set during totality at 8:03 a.m. CST and the rest of the eclipse will not be visible from our lo-

cation.

For the next opportunity to experience all phases of a total lunar eclipse from Manitoba, we only need to wait until Jan. 20, 2019.

The waning crescent moon forms a compact triangle with Mars and Jupiter low in the southeastern predawn sky on Jan. 11 before sunrise. Reddish Mars will be much fainter than yellowish-coloured Jupiter.

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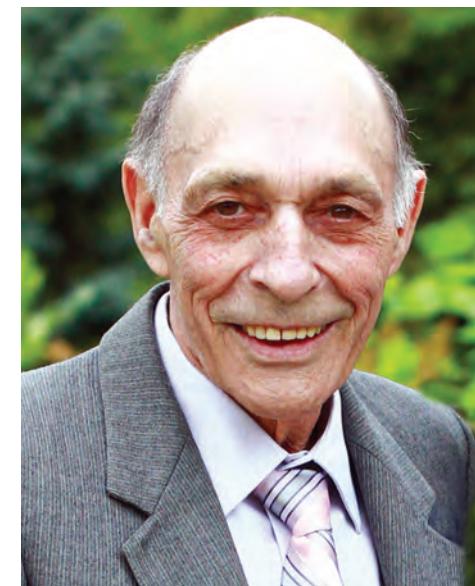
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7. 2 Mirrors and Smitty's Cup & \$100 Gift Certificate - Winner: Barb Popowich
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