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**WEEKLY NEWS** 

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**EXPRESS PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT** 

Welder and machinist Ryan Johnson makes parts for Bombardier snow machines, which are no longer manufactured but are still in use in Manitoba, Canada's north and other countries. Johnson opened his shop, Ryan Johnson General Machining, Welding and Repair, last spring in the Gimli Industrial Park and business has really taken off.

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# Making tracks with Gimli-based Bombardier parts manufacturer

#### **By Patricia Barrett**

A Gimli-based welder and machinist is really making tracks after he started manufacturing parts for Bombardier snow machines, which are so integral to and beloved by Manitoba's commercial fishers.

Ryan Johnson opened a shop called RJ GMWR (Ryan Johnson General Machining, Welding and Repair) in the Gimli Industrial Park last spring where he has been making parts for the iconic vehicles. He's seen production ramp up once people from across Manitoba and beyond learned of his service.

As far as he's aware, Johnson said he's the only manufacturer in Western Canada making Bombardier snow machine parts, which are no longer available from the Bombardier company, as well as the only manufacturer focused on supporting the commercial fishing industry.

Having welding and machining experience, as well as a penchant for "tinkering and fixing mechanical stuff" all his life, Johnson said he learned how to make the parts.

"I've always been the mechanical type and some is just experience I gained over time. My dad had a Bombardier he used for commercial fishing. I started off this business building components such as net lifters



Bombardiers have a steering wheel and gas and brake pedals. Early models were standard with a clutch.

and sleigh augers for the commercial fishery then expanded into making Bombardier parts," said Johnson, who in addition to running the business is the superintendent of vessel operations and chief engineer of the Namao research vessel that operates on Lake Winnipeg during open water season. "People started contacting me and asking if I'd work on their Bombardiers and I started doing that. We're now getting more and more customers."

With the Bombardier company no longer making the parts, snow machine owners in Manitoba used to get their parts made at Shaver & Sons Enterprises in Stonewall. When Shaver closed down last year, Johnson bought his equipment, outfitting his shop with jigs, templates and other



**EXPRESS PHOTOS BY PATRICIA BARRETT** 

Johnson is currently restoring a customer's Bombardier at his shop in the Gimli Industrial Park.

specialized machinery required to make parts that fit perfectly into and onto the snow machines.

After a few months of operation, Johnson hired a full-time employee and a high school student.

The ground-breaking snow machines — which look like a cross between Herbie the Love Bug (Volkswagen Beetle) with its round, aerodynamic design and a Second World War Sherman tank with its tracks — were the brainchild of Joseph-Armand Bombardier, who founded L'Auto-Neige Bombardier Limitee (Bombardier Snowmobile Limited) in rural Quebec in the 1930s.

The inventor and entrepreneur invented the snow machines, which are also referred to as a snow coach or snow bus, to help people in rural

areas traverse difficult snow-covered terrain. He built the B7 (for seven passengers) in 1937 then the B12 (for 12 passengers) five years later, according to Bombardier's website. The vehicles were put to all sorts of uses, including transporting school children, medical personnel and freight.

Although the snow machine is pronounced "bom-bar-dee-eh," most people say "bom-ba-deer" or even "bomber" for short. The machines are most commonly painted blue or yellow and have a gas engine in the rear, an enclosed cab, round passenger windows, tracked wheels and large skis that sit under the bonnet, along with plenty of cargo-carrying capacity that make them indispensable to

Continued on page 3

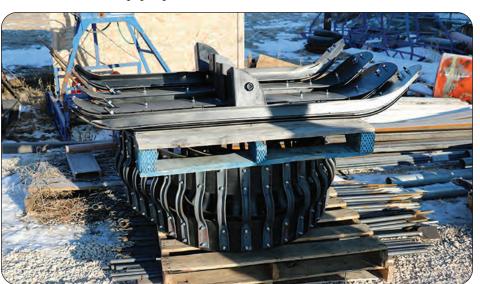


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Johnson makes skis and tracks among several other components for the iconic snow machines.

## > MAKING TRACKS, FROM PG. 2

commercial fishers. They can travel quickly, at speeds of about 35-40 miles per hour.

Customers come to Johnson looking for new parts such as suspension springs, skis, ski rods, tracks, bearings and "everything else," said Johnson. Parts will break down from age or from cold temperatures and the unforgiving terrain on Lake Winnipeg.

"If you drive your Bombardier into a piece of ice, you can break parts because ice doesn't give. And it doesn't matter how careful you are when you're driving," he said.

The best thing Bombardier owners can do every year is a little bit of maintenance so that eventual repairs don't become a big expense.

Johnson said he thinks the Bombardier company stopped making its snow machines around 1981. Part of the reason for that could be that they were so well constructed with a long lifespan.

"I'm not exactly sure why they stopped production; I don't know if there just wasn't enough demand at the time or what. I think in part it has to do with the older Bombardiers that run so long. We've got Bombardiers out there from the late 1940s and early 1950s still going on Lake Winnipeg and other places," said Johnson.

The Express contacted Bombardier for information about when and why it stopped making the machines.

Johnson's company is not only supporting the commercial fishing industry in Manitoba but also the tourism industry around the world. He said he's had parts inquiries from Bombardier owners in Hay River in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, the United States and Norway.

"I just had a message the other day from someone in Norway who has a fleet of 12 Bombardiers and he's looking for some parts. There are also a few guys down in the States that run them. There's one fellow from Yellowstone [National Park] that has a fleet and has contacted me about parts," said Johnson. "Lately, it seems there's



The Bombardier repair shop in the Gimli Industrial Park

a big surge in people restoring them - not just fixing them up to use for work but restoring them the same way you would a classic car, putting a nice leather interior in them with a stereo system and using them for pleasure."

Restored Bombardiers can be worth a mint, fetching anywhere from \$40,000 up to \$75,000, he added.

Some commercial fishers have thought about converting their Bombardiers to electric vehicles, said Johnson, but the biggest problem with that would be the added weight of the batteries.

"You want to keep them light so that you can get them on thinner ice. The heavier the machine is, the thicker the ice you'll need," said Johnson. "Most guys with wide-gauge Bombardiers will wait for about 10 to 12 inches of ice before they'll take them out."

Justin Gerbrandt, who lives in the Gimli area and is a mechanic by trade, had a starring role for three years on the *Ice Vikings* television documentary about commercial ice fishing on Lake Winnipeg. He and his fishing partner Mike Lenton, who also appeared on

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**EXPRESS PHOTO BY JUSTIN GERBRANDT** 

Commercial fisher Justin Gerbrandt restored this 1950s Bombardier (shell of the machine shown) with help from Ryan Johnson.





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## Chamber sees uptick in 2023 membership, new programs for 2024

By Patricia Barrett

The Gimli Chamber of Commerce saw an increase in membership over the course of 2023 and will be offering its business members and other entrepreneurs a number of new programs over the course of the upcoming year.

president Chamber Samantha Hampton said she's focusing on three major areas in 2024 — marketing, networking and education — to move the chamber forward and attract new members, provide value to businesses that are already members and offer new programs and services.

"Our board's diligent efforts, as well as innovative thinking and proactive initiatives, have directly contributed to a remarkable 56 per cent increase in our membership this year," said Hampton.

Last year Hampton and the board wanted to find out what sorts of initiatives would be of value to their membership and what sort of services the chamber could offer to the community. To that end, they formed a communications committee and conducted a survey of its membership.

Based on feedback from that survey, Hampton said a new website was built, marketing supports including email marketing campaigns were offered, educational programs created and networking opportunities called STIR were held. An annual partnership opportunity package to entice sponsors into working with the chamber was also introduced.

STIR stands for socialize, talk, interact and reconnect. The events provide opportunities for Gimli business owners and members of other Interlake chambers to get together, exchange ideas, find solutions to common challenges and make new connections. Hampton said she encouraged other Interlake chambers to adopt STIR events, and the Central Interlake

**EXPRESS PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAMANTHA HAMPTON** 

Some of the 2023-24 executive board members of the Gimli Chamber of Commerce. From left: Damon Kennedy, Cheryl Buhler, Barb Stein, Anita McAlinden, Kathy Sauerborn, Romanna Klymkiw and Samantha Hampton. Missing: Suzy Rayner, Tanya Grimolfson, Michelle Thomson, Kim Giesbrecht and Rayme Thomson.

Chamber of Commerce in Arborg held its first STIR in April.

"We've had past participation for STIR events ranging from 25 to 100 business. All it takes is that single connection to make a big impact," said Hampton. "The Gimli chamber put a lot of emphasis in 2023 on fostering initiatives that really ignite that connection through networking. If other chambers are doing things, you want to see what's working great for them and see if you want to try it."

The chamber is offering entrepreneurs a series of educational and professional development programs in 2024 to help them develop or enhance their business skills. The survey the chamber had sent to its membership included a list of topics people wanted to learn about. Highly rated topics included marketing, financial literacy, self-help, communication, leadership and running a non-profit organization.

The educational programs will kick off with a Lunch & Learn session titled "How to Plan for Your Future" on Feb. 20 (registration opens on Jan. 22). It will focus on financial literacy and is sponsored by Access Credit Union.

Non-chamber members are welcome to attend.

"We will be sending out invitations to chambers in the surrounding areas — Selkirk, Central Interlake — to participate in our Lunch & Learn programs," she said. "You don't have to be a chamber member to attend the training; it's for anyone that wants to level up and fill their toolbox."

Better Yourself Breakfasts will also be offered to accommodate business owners who can only attend sessions in the mornings.

"Continued education for small business owners is paramount, essentially serving as a cornerstone for staying abreast of industry trends," said Hampton. "You have to always refine your skills and adapt to our dynamic market, otherwise you won't be able to sustain growth."

Because there are lots of businesses in the RM of Gimli who aren't part of the chamber, Hampton said they'll be looking at ways to get them to join.

"One of our big focuses will be to figure out innovative ways to not only provide value to businesses that

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are right in town but also provide it to the hundreds of businesses in Gimli and surrounding areas that are off the beaten path and aren't chamber members. The challenge is how do we best represent the business community as a whole regardless of their industry?" she said. "We can say that a business should join the chamber, but what are we going to do for them in return for their membership fee? Part of that will be our focus on marketing, education and networking, as well as tourism."

In August the chamber hosted a visit from Manitoba Chambers of Commerce president Chuck Davidson, who toured about 11 businesses and met with business owners afterwards during a mix and mingle.

"It was nice for the Manitoba chambers to see what Gimli was doing and discuss with business owners what's working and what our struggles are," said Hampton.

The chamber also partnered with

the Manitoba chambers and the provincial government's department of transportation and infrastructure for a pilot project that will feature local business logos on Manitoba highway signs. The goal of the initiative is to divert more highway traffic into Gim-

"We're still in the planning stages. Business owners will have to apply, meet certain criteria and pay a fee," said Hampton.

In December Hampton went to the Manitoba legislature for Chamber Advocacy Day where she and members from about 13 other chambers had one-on-one meetings with ministers and got to meet premier Wab

"We had a change to advocate for the business community, learn about the new portfolios and new government agenda and try to strengthen our relationships with different ministers," said Hampton.

Other highlights from the past year include the chamber teaming up with Gimli High School Grade 10 students who digitally designed an image for the chamber's membership card, which provides members with discounts at various businesses. Student Sammie Liebrecht's rendition of win-

ter angling on Lake Winnipeg was featured on the card in 2023. A new image will be featured on the chamber's membership card in 2024.

The chamber's executive board is made up of local entrepreneurs. In addition to Hampton, who owns Creative Community Promotions, the board consists of vice-president Barb Stein (Hidden Treasures Art Studio), treasurer Anita McAlinden (Interlake Handmade Boutique), secretary Suzy Rayner (Valkyrie Pest Solutions) past co-president Cheryl Buhler and executive members Michelle Thomson (Autumnwood Motel & RV Resort), Romanna Klymkiw (Romanna Klymkiw Music Studio), Damon Kennedy (Spruce Sands RV & Resort), Rayme Thomson (Autumnwood Motel & RV Resort), Kim Giesbrecht (Inn on Centre, Right Choice Realty), Tanya Grimolfson (The Powder Princess) and Kathy Sauerborn (Access Credit Union).

For more information about programs and services, visit the Gimli Chamber of Commerce on Facebook or www.gimlichamber.ca

# Correction

In the Dec. 21 edition of the Express Weekly News, we published the article, "Small acts of kindness make a world of difference at Betel Home" and said the Gimli Christmas Elves decorated Betel Home. However, it was actually the recreation facilitator Sandy Boyer who did the decorating.

The Express apologizes for the

## > MAKING TRACKS, FROM PG. 3

the show, restored a 1950s Bombardier with help from Johnson and featured it in the program.

Gerbrandt said they used to get their Bombardier parts from Shaver in Stonewall and alerted Johnson that Shaver was going out of business.

"Ryan is one in a thousand guys that would be able to take this job on," said Gerbrandt. "There's not a whole lot of younger people now that want to get into a trade like Ryan is doing or that have previous knowledge of this kind of work. Ryan has a background working on engines on different ships."

Johnson built a frame for their Bombardier into which to mount a new engine and transmission that Gerbrandt

"What a lot of guys like Mike and myself have done is taken an old bomber and installed a new engine and some new electronics in it like GPS and put in lights and other

The importance of having Johnson supporting the commercial fishery in Manitoba, as well as other owners of the snow machines, can't be emphasized enough, he said.

"Mike and I are both very happy that Ryan took this on. Just because I'm a mechanic doesn't mean that I can machine a part for myself; I can't do that. This is where Ryan is critical to our fishing operation," said Gerbrandt. "And he's been super good if we need something by a certain time; he understands — because he has commercial fished and his dad has fished — that a week without your bomber will equal a lot of lost revenue. Having him take this business over is not only just good for convenience



because he's in Gimli, but it prevents fishers from losing potentially huge amounts of revenue."

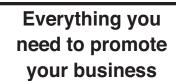
Although Gerbrandt and Lenton rely on their Bombardier to transport thousands of pounds of fish from the lake, they also use snowmobiles until there's enough ice to withstand the weight of the snow machines plus their catch, he said. Even then, commercial fishers will "always need snowmobiles to drive in front of the bombers" to check pressure cracks in the ice. Their own machine once hit a crack and sank down about two feet. But he's not heard of anyone in the last 15 to 20 years being unable to get out after going down.

"If you ever hit a big pressure crack or have a sheet of ice open up, your bomber will go down. That's why a lot of guys on Lake Winnipeg will have top hatches cut into the ceiling of their machines. We put one in ours. I've heard of a lot of guys that had to use them," said Gerbrandt. "The bomber starts going down and that top hatch above your two front seats is your only lifeline. It wasn't something they [Bombardier company] thought of when they designed them."

Johnson said when Bombardiers or other ice fishing vehicles sink or get stuck in ice, his uncle in Riverton, who has a towing company, can pull them out of the lake with

a frame and a winch.

For more information about the services at Ryan Johnson General Machining, Welding and Repair, call 204-651-0121. The shop is located in the Gimli Industrial Park at 193 Quintal





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# Gimli home with historical connections to early Icelanders cherished

**Bv Patricia Barrett** 

A Gimli home with historical connections to Icelanders who immigrated to Manitoba and who made contributions to the early development of Gimli is being lovingly remembered by the descendants of one family who lived in the home for decades.

The home at 44 Fourth Ave. has had three owners since it was built in 1931. The Paulson family lived in the home over the course of the 1930s and 1940s. The Stevens family then took up residence in the mid-1940s followed by the Barlow family, who purchased it in the late 1970s.

Norman and Margret Stevens spent over 30 years in the home, from 1946 to 1978, raising their family and contributing to the development of the community and the commercial fishing industry as their forebears had.

Aileen Grant and Kristine Ennis, the granddaughters of Margret and Norman, shared their memories and photos with the *Express*, saying the Stevens family were among the earliest of Gimli's residents and played an integral role in the development of the town. They also contributed to the social fabric of their community through their preservation of the Icelandic culture and history.

Kristine Ennis, who moved to Gimli from the U.S. with her husband and daughter, said she has a strong connection to the home.

"My grandparents Norman and Margret Stevens raised their family in that home and I have many fond memories of it myself," said Ennis.

The Stevens family helped develop Gimli in its early days, she said, and are part of the *Gimli Saga*, published in 1975 by the Gimli Women's Institute. The *Saga* provides a history of the Icelanders who immigrated to Manitoba and the contributions they made.



Norman and Margret's three granddaughters on the porch in 1975. From left: Denise, Debbie (Norma's daughters) and Kristine (Gudrun's daughter).

Ennis' cousin Aileen Grant, who now lives in B.C., said her grand-parents were quite poor in the 1930s and early 1940s, and that it was only through "hard work and sacrifice" that they were able to buy the Fourth Avenue home from the Paulson family.

Over the years her grandmother Margret made a substantial contribution to the preservation of Gimli's history, she said, by spending countless volunteer hours working on the *Gimli Saga* from the dining room of the home.

"One of my fondest memories as a child in the early '70s was watching her type and write at that dining table, among stacks of great old leather-bound books and documents on special loan to her from the library archives," said Grant. "I was allowed to look at, but not touch, what appeared to my young mind as mysterious an-



**EXPRESS PHOTOS COURTESY OF KRISTINE ENNIS AND AILEEN GRANT** 

Peggy Stevens wedding party at the house. From left: (standing) Dr. George Johnson, Joe Stevens, Joe's wife Kristine (Sigurgeirson), John Grant, Peggy Stevens, Margret and Norman.

cient volumes from the olden days of New Iceland. It was the award-winning *Gimli Saga* she was working on as a member of the history committee. Over those many months she researched, interviewed local families, wrote, edited and even illustrated to bring that *Saga* to life. I recall numerous visitors to the house related to that purpose, including from the committee chair, Ethel Howard, and then-Mayor Violet Einarson."

Margret Stevens was born into the Blondal family and was adopted by the Skaptason family after her mother died. Her father Bjorn Blondal built the original Lakeview Hotel in Gimli and the historic H.P. Tergesen home, which is a few doors down from the Stevens' home and one of Gimli's heritage homes.

Margret's uncle, Jon Blondal, was a renowned photographer who founded Baldwin and Blöndal, a studio that produced volumes of photographs of New Icelanders, which Grant said are cherished by their descendants and by historians. Margret's brother, August Blondal, was a physician and a talented artist who designed the Pioneer Memorial Cairn in Gimli to commemorate the arrival of the first Icelandic settlers in the area in 1875. Margret's adoptive father Joseph Skaptason was appointed the provincial chief inspector of fisheries around 1920.

Margret, who was a school teacher, was inspired to produce the *Gimli Saga* through her lifelong role in the Gimli Women's Institute, beginning in 1922 when she was 20 years old. After the final version of the book was published, Margret then started



Margret and Norman outside the house.



Norman with his hockey team, which won a trophy in 1931.

working on her and Norman's respective family histories. The dedication Margret had for historiography inspired Grant herself to pursue her own work in genealogy.

Grant and Ennis shared part of a scrapbook Margret had kept. It contains photographs that include the original Lakeview Hotel in 1907 and the hockey team on which Norman played. Margret also preserved news-



The Stevens family on Norman and Margret's 25th wedding anniversary in 1950.

# HINDSIGHT ... hauling hay on a cold winter day

Thirty below zero. The sky was clear blue, the air very sharp, and a light but frigid breeze blew from the north.

Before breakfast, the boy's dad had taken a shovel full of coals from the wood furnace and put them on a piece of sheet metal that he slid under the oil pan of the LA Case tractor. The coals would liquefy the frozen oil in the pan and allow the engine to turn over and, hopefully, start.

The big work tractor was built in the mid-'40s, and although it only put out around 45 horse-power, it could pull anything he owned. That day, it was his stackmover that needed to be hauled.

The boy's dad had made the stackmover by hand — welded the frame himself, laminated the wooden beams himself, recycled an old winch and designed the hydraulics.

The finished product was a platform consisting of 10 16-foot laminated wooden beams spaced a foot apart, pointed at one end and resting on a heavy steel frame on wheels.

The mover would be backed up to a haystack and the platform would be tilted by hydraulics so that the pointed ends of the beams could touch the ground.

A sling would be put around the back of the stack and, using a series of cables and pulleys attached to the sling and powered by the tractor's power

be winched onto the tilted platform. The platform would be returned to level and the haystack hauled away. Unloading was the same process in

The method saved significant time and labour compared to pitching hay by hand, and it meant one man could do it himself.

Volume had driven the need for mechanization.

Two men could pitch and move enough hay to feed 10 or 20 cows for the winter, but what if you had 40 cows and only one man? You needed machinery, and machinery cost money. Much cheaper to make it yourself.

While mechanization makes a man more efficient, it doesn't change the

Some wild hay was stacked in areas where the heavy stackmover would get stuck in soft ground during warm weather, so the hay had to be fetched well after the prairies froze solid. That made snow in the fields a problem.

The tractor was big and heavy, and with the chains installed on the big lugged tires, it could plow through a lot of snow, but there were still some deep drifts that would have to be shovelled by hand.

The cold was a problem. The boy's dad would be out in the -30 C weather for a least three hours, the bulk of which would be spent driving the

take off, the four-ton haystack would tractor with no physical motion to generate body heat. GoreTex and Thinsulate were not yet in the lexicon, but wool, felt and leather were.

> He wore a giant canvas parka with several layers underneath, ending at long wool underwear. Heavy oversized boots with several socks and insoles were the best, but those feet would be lumps of ice by the time they returned — stamp your feet all you want.

> Heavy leather mitts that went almost to the elbow, lined with wool mitts, still would not keep his fingers from turning white.

> Luckily, he could warm his hands on the tractor's engine block enough to make them supple enough to hook and unhook the chains and cables of the stackmover.

> His head was covered with a canvas earflap hat lined with wool, covered by the parka's hood. The edges of the hood would be white with frost from his frozen breath, and if he was lucky his cheeks would be red with cold and not white with frostbite when he returned.

> So he set off, sitting on the tractor seat in the open air, his breath in frozen puffs behind him, the tractor's exhaust a plume in the air. Three hours later he returned and unloaded the stack, then went into the house to warm up. Tomorrow he would go again, without complaint.



Av Olson and his siblings.

There are lots of men like him in the world. Quiet men who do the hard things because they know they are the thin edge of the wedge that feeds and houses their family. Men who are out of the house first and back in last. Men who do not separate their work from their lives, nor from their family. Men like his dad.

HINDSIGHT is a new monthly feature written by a long-time Interlake resident who writes under the pen-name Av Olson While each story is based on real events, minor creative liberties have been taken and names have been changed.

## > HISTORIC CONNECTIONS, FROM PG. 6

paper clippings of notable occasions, information about her family and obituaries.

Like Margret's family, Norman's side of the family also had a connection to the commercial fishery. His descendants worked in the industry and Norman himself worked first as a clerk then manager of the Armstrong Gimli Fish Company. Norman's father, Capt. John Stevens, worked on the M.S. Goldfield freighter, which transported fish from camps and communities along Lake Winnipeg. A room in the Selkirk Marine Museum pays homage to the Stevens family contribution to the fishing industry.

Over the years, the Stevens family entertained a number of notable Manitobans at the Fourth Avenue home, including Dr. George Johnson, a physician who later served as MLA, cabinet minister and Manitoba's 20th lieutenant-governor and who also earned the Order of Canada. Johnson's wife Doris (nee Blondal) was Margret's first cousin.

Grant said the most frequent visitor to the Stevens' home was the Johnsons' springer spaniel, Lucy, who use to roam the neighbourhood and would promptly arrive at 11 a.m. on the porch where Margret would greet her with a chunk of cheddar cheese.

"My grandparents were great examples of that first generation of Canadian-born New Icelanders, with strong ties to other Gimli families and to their Icelandic forebears, cousins, culture, language and history," said Grant.

The Fourth Avenue home was originally owned by the then village mayor Christian P. Paulson, who emigrated from Iceland in 1876, a year after the first Icelanders arrived in the area known as New Iceland. The Stevens' descendants (Norman's parents) had also emigrated that year and Grant said she thinks the Paulsons and Stevens families "likely" knew each another through their connection to the commercial fishing industry.

Grant said she's grateful to the Barlows for their stewardship of the home from the late '70s onwards, and they had in the past graciously allowed members of the Stevens family to visit the home on several occasions, which "meant so much to me and other descendants."

The last decade [1970s] in which Norman and Margret lived in the Fourth Avenue home was one that all the grandchildren and their last surviving child particularly remember and cherish, said Grant. There were many family gatherings, traditional Icelandic food and tales of Gimli. Norman and Margret celebrated their



Norman and Margret Stevens' 50th anniversary in July 1975. Nearly all of their descendants from across Canada and the U.S. were present at 44 Fourth Ave., as were more than 100 of their friends and neighbours.

50th wedding anniversary at the house in 1975.

"Two years from now, many of the Stevens descendants will reunite for the 150th Gimli anniversary and reflect fondly on that gathering 50 years prior," said Grant.

The house, which had been formerly named the Paulson House, was renamed by Gimli council a few months ago to the Barlow House to recognize former mayor and councillor Bill Barlow and his family's 45-year history of caring for the

# Small guest house in Arborg goes big on country charm

By Patricia Barrett

A small Arborg guest house that's available as a short-term rental is big on country charm and gaining popularity since it was launched last year.

Ashley and Graham Campbell, who both grew up in Arborg, built a 480-square-foot home on the last lot at the north end of town and are offering it as a short-term rental on Airbnb.

"Graham and I really love hosting guests and building this unique, small guest house was always something we thought about," said Ashley Campbell. "We wanted to keep it small, almost at tiny house size proportions, but create a modern, romantic and memorable place for guests to rest, relax and recharge and take a step back from their busy lives."

The house, which sits on a oneacre treed lot and is fully serviced by town utilities, has an open concept design with a luxurious, minimalist interior, a full kitchen that includes a Nespresso coffee machine, a tiled walk-in shower, queen-sized bed and full-sized sofa. The Campbells also installed a barbecue and a hot tub on the deck outside where guests can relax after a stroll around town or an adventure in the countryside.



The open concept home features a queen bed and sofa.

Launched last August, the house and the hot tub are available all four seasons, and Campbell said the guests they've hosted to date have complimented them on the structure's design and finishings and the local attractions.

"Our guests can wake up with the sun and their have coffee. And at the end of the day they can sit in the hot tub surrounded by trees and watch the sun set," she said.

The short-term rental is ideal for people who live in urban centres and want to get away from the hustle and



EXPRESS PHOTOS COURTESY OF GRAHAM AND ASHLEY CAMPBELL

Graham and Ashley Campbell outside their small guest house in Arborg. The house is available as a short-term rental under the name Our Tiny Hideaway.

bustle of city life. Arborg has lots to offer in summer with entertainment such as the Street Festival; the Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village (museum) and fireworks on special occasions; the Arborg Bakery with its famous bread, pastries and pizza; and plenty of outdoor recreational pursuits such as strolls and picnics along the Icelandic River with its iconic bridges, as well as winter skating and hiking along the river trail.

"We live in a really great community. Arborg is a small town but we have a lot to offer here. In the winter I tell our guests to bring their skates because we have a wonderful skating trail on

the Icelandic River," said Campbell. "I think that being in the country we take for granted how much outdoor space we have here. The city is so busy. Here, you can sit on the deck and listen to the birds sing. That's a huge thing for people in the city who don't have that kind of environment."

The house is not intended for people who want to party, she said. It's geared towards couples, best friends or mothers and daughters wanting an opportunity to unwind in a rural setting.

The home can be found on Airbnb or on Instagram under the name @ourtinyhideaway.





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#### **EXPRESS PHOTO BY DIANE WATTLING**

Ice fishers are reminded to be cautious of open water. On Jan. 7 there was open water about two feet wide along the ice ridge in Balsam Bay. The recorded temperature for Gimli on Sunday was -14 degrees C. Help the Express record the weather of the week and send in your photos of friends or family enjoying the outdoors. Email: news@expressweeklynews.ca.

# **Gypsumville RCMP execute search** warrants, seize drugs and guns

By Lana Meier

The Gypsumville RCMP executed four search warrants at separate residences in the community of Pinaymootang First Nation on Jan. 4. The RCMP Emergency Response Team, RCMP Explosives Disposal Unit and RCMP Police Dog Services all assisted in executing the

The searches resulted in the seizure of two firearms, including a double-barreled shotgun and a handgun, along with ammunition. Additionally, drug trafficking paraphernalia and both bulk and individually packaged crack cocaine and powder cocaine were also con-

Three individuals were arrested as a result of these warrants:

Stella Woodford, a 69-year-old female, has been charged with possession for purpose of trafficking and two counts of breach of conditions.

**RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF GIMLI** 



### **MUNICIPAL GRANT APPLICATIONS 2024**

The deadline for the Municipal Grant applications is February 15, 2024

If your organization would like to apply for a grant, the grant application package is available 3 ways:

- On the RM of Gimli website, www.gimli.ca
- By email request, gimli@rmgimli.com
- By mail, call (204) 642-6650

Applications received after the deadline date will not be considered.

Dated this 3rd day of January, 2024 Kelly Cosgrove CAO

Rural Municipality of Gimli

Courtney Woodford, a 35-year-old male, has been charged with multiple offenses including possession for the purpose of trafficking, unsafe storage of firearms, possession of a weapon for dangerous purpose, unauthorized possession of four firearms, possession of a weapon obtained by crime, possession of weapons while prohibited and breach of conditions on two separate occasions.

Raylon Houle, a 34-year-old female, has been charged with multiple offences including possession for the purpose of trafficking, unsafe storage of firearms, possession of a weapon for dangerous purpose, unauthorized possession of firearm (four counts) and possession of weapon obtained by crime.

All three suspects remain in custody.

#### **Community Support Service**

**AA Meetings in Ashern** Open Meeting Time: 6-7pm Fridays

Starting Friday March 3rd. Location: #11 2nd Ave North -Pioneer Manor ( beside the main door entrance of Pioneer Manor) Contact AAMBCO@mts.net

#### **AA Eriksdale**

Eriksdale United Church building #7 Main Street, Erikesdale (side door)

> **Meetings are Mondays** at 6:30 p.m.

#### **AA Winnipeg Beach**

Ladv of the Lake RC Church Corner of Hwy. 9 and Lake Ave., Winnipeg Beach

> **Meetings are Saturdays** between 7 and 8 p.m.

Contact Ann J 204-389-3417

#### Gimli Group AA

Bldg 18 Municipal Rd Industrial Park

Fri & Sun Mtgs at 7:30 pm

#### Al-Anon Gimli and Winnipeg Beach

Join us at 17B Loni Beach Road, next to New Horizon building... Gimli at 7:00 pm Wednesday evenings for an hour of support, strength, guidance and Hope. Contact 204-389-4777.

All ages welcome.

**AA Riverton Group** 12 Main St. at the Riverton Senior Centre Mondays 7:30 p.m.



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# Operation Red Nose turned out to be quite the ride

**By David Connors** 

After being shut down for three years, the Safe Ride Home program quickly hit its stride. A total of 77 volunteers got 103 groups home safe and snug (along with their vehicles) after a night of good cheer. Organizers only expect those numbers to grow next holiday season.

Volunteers came from community groups such as Gimli Car Club, Gimli Cross Country Ski Club, Skate Interlake, Gimli Minor Hockey, Gimli Curling Club, Kiwanis, Diageo, as well as members of the public.

"This was the first time the Rotary Club ran the program," said co-chair Dave LeBlanc, adding that the club had invaluable support from Judy Kushnir and the Gimli Car Club, which had operated the program for 15 years.

"We had a late start, which caused a lot of anxiety. But we are committed to doing it again next year. And we will be better — rides were just half of what they were pre-COVID."

What had LeBlanc pumped was the considerable support Gimli businesses and volunteers gave to the program. "Gimli is almost an over-supporter of community events," said LeBlanc.

There were at least 15 volunteers on duty each Friday and Saturday night in December, plus New Year's Eve, and there was plenty of food donated by local stores and eateries to keep them fuelled up. Speros Pizza, Brennivins and Pacos sent over pizzas to Operation Red Nose headquarters, which was in a meeting room donated by the Lakeview Resort for the entire month of December. Tim Hortons and Robin's provided doughnuts and coffee, Shelley Hays (of the muchmissed Shelley D's) cooked up a big pot of chilli, buckets of fried chicken arrived from Chicken Chef, Interlake Brewery sent over some of their delicious creations, and the list goes on. Prairie Communications donated 14 two-way radios to keep Red Nose teams in touch with dispatchers.

Other businesses donated gift baskets to be used for prize draws for volunteers. Please see the Rotary Club's Thank You ad for a full list of donors.

The three Gimli auto dealers each donated vehicles for the program.

"It was so much fun," said co-chair



**EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED** 

Rotary co-chair Dwayne Binns is happy to report that 103 groups were delivered home safely during the holiday season thanks to a number of groups and volunteers.

Dwayne Binns. "We are already getting phone calls from people and businesses who want to be involved next year."

Along with all the fun, volunteers also had some grave reasons for participating.

When Binns was asked why he volunteers, he replied, "We have all seen the tragic results of drunk driving. I just want to help prevent that from happening."

LeBlanc treasures his time in the community and likes to give back.

"When I was leaving home to join the RCMP, my grandparents told me to regard every place I was transferred to as home. And after I retired, I finally had the time to do everything in the community that I couldn't do while I was working," said LeBlanc.

When the \$2,619 donated by clients and cash from local businesses are added up, the Rotary Club's Operation Red Nose plans to donate five \$1,000 cheques to local youth groups.

But the primary goal of Operation Red Nose is to get people — and sometimes their dogs (one group of four piled in with their canine companion) — home safely.

"One client told me he was so glad the program was back because a year or two ago, he ended up driving his vehicle into the ditch!"





## Interlake real estate holds steady through inflation and increasing mortgage rates

**By Patricia Barrett** 

Although Manitobans struggled with inflation and the arrival of higher mortgage rates in 2023, the real estate market in the Interlake remained relatively stable and is expected to follow suit this year.

Kim Giesbrecht, owner of Gimlibased Right Choice Realty, said Manitoba is somewhat immune to extreme housing price fluctuations that some of Canada's biggest cities typically experience.

"The relative stability we saw last year speaks to the steadiness of our market in Manitoba. We don't experience the real estate market highs and the lows as much as big cities such as Vancouver or Toronto do. Manitoba generally tends to hold steady," she said. "We did definitely see an increase in housing prices during COVID and an increased demand for property, but prices are definitely holding steady."

Giesbrecht crunched the numbers from 2023 to provide a snapshot of the Interlake region, which for the purposes of her analysis runs from Clandeboye to Hecla in the eastern half of the region and from the northern border of the RM of Rosser to Ashern in the western half of the region, as well as all the communities in between including Stonewall, Arborg and Fisher Branch.

In the residential detached homes category (excluding condominiums, duplexes and side-by-sides), Giesbrecht said the number of sales in 2022 were higher than they were last

There were 363 sales in 2022 and 325 sales in 2023, roughly a 10 per cent decline. But at the same time, the average sale price for homes in that category increased from \$272,000 to \$280,000.

And although there was a provincial property assessment in 2022, Giesbrecht said that generally does not affect housing sale prices as that is determined by the market and factors such as location. Assessment values determine what a homeowner will pay in property taxes.

Digging down further on housing prices in the residential detached category, Giesbrecht said there was a modest increase in sale prices for stock in the mid-\$300,000 range.

"Sales decreased by 40 units in 2023 verses 2022 for anything priced up to \$349,999. That's a pretty big number. However, that price range had a modest increase of 1.1 per cent where we saw the average price increasing from \$214,289 up to \$216,721," she said. "Residential detached can also include a higher-end winter-

ized cottage. Because we're looking at areas right up to Ashern, we see smaller rural properties that aren't priced higher. We're hard-pressed in Gimli, for example, to find a home in the [\$200,000] price range. Price is relative to location and the number of people that want to live there and that can either increase or decrease market demand."

Homes in smaller Interlake rural communities will give people "more bang for their buck," she added, but the trade-off comes with a lack of proximity to conveniences such as health-care facilities, schools and shopping. Properties in Stonewall or lakefront properties will typically be priced higher than homes in remote rural areas.

One of the interesting findings from her analysis was that Interlake properties priced in the \$350,000 to \$499,000 range saw higher sales numbers in 2023, with 65 units sold compared to 59 units sold in 2022. Units priced \$500,000 and over, however, saw a decrease in the number of sales.

She also researched the R26 area the Winnipeg Real Estate Board designates different areas by numbers and letters — which stretches from roughly Silver Harbour down to Matlock and about three to four miles west of Highway 8. She found that sales numbers decreased last year but, again, increased in sale price.

Prices in six different categories Giesbrecht said she looked at showed no housing price decreases. Overall, prices for homes in the region tended to increase.

Although there were increases in interest rates from the Bank of Canada in 2022 and 2023, Giesbrecht said Interlake sale and price data for housing from 2023 were generally "positive," meaning there was no substantial impact on the market.

"Real estate is still one of the more stable investments. In Winnipeg, there might be a little more up and down, but in our rural areas there's generally a slow and steady increase," said Giesbrecht.

In terms of what people can expect in 2024, Giesbrecht said projections indicate a "slight increase" in the number of sales and prices towards the second half of the year.

There are buyers out there waiting to find the right property. Because there's a general lack of inventory and fewer properties on the market, buyers have had fewer choices. And that tends to keep demand and pricing steady, she said.

If regulations for short-term rentals (STRs) affect the way some proper-



**EXPRESS PHOTO BY JO-ANNE PROCTER** 

The lack of inventory and fewer properties on the market tends to keep demand and pricing steady.

ties are operated — Gimli for instance passed a short-term rental bylaw and an accommodation tax bylaw — Giesbrecht said that could possibly bring those properties to market. Continuing inflation, as well, could mean people have less money to spend on STR vacations.

"I think there might be a slight increase in recreational properties coming to the market in 2024 as people look at their overall financing or think they don't need a cottage anymore," she said. "Or if some people who were using cottages and homes for short-term rentals see demand for those dropping, that will open up more inventory."

Some people may be feeling anxious about higher mortgage rates right now, she said, but the stress test, which applies to federally regulated banks and which requires people to qualify for a mortgage at a higher rate, has actually served as a "buffer" during inflation, allowing many people to hold on to their homes. And, historically, mortgage rates went through the roof in the 1980s at around 18 per cent or higher compared to the last decade or

"To expect interest rates at two or three per cent to continue forever is unreasonable," she said. "And even though they're in the five per cent range right now, in terms of an investment in housing, it's a reasonable amount to expect to pay," she said. "I think many people are still having to make adjustments from when they were paying a lower mortgage rate, but they're still able to afford their home in Manitoba. And I think buyers will still be able to find something they'll be comfortable in and securing their future."

For more information about services and properties, contact Right Choice Realty at 204-641-8450, email kim@ rightchoicerealty.ca or visit the company's website: rightchoicerealty.ca

## Music medal



**PHOTO SUBMITTED** 

Nate Borkowsky of Gimli was recently awarded the Conservatory Canada Medal for Excellence for the Level 1 Classic Conservatory Canada piano exam. This award represents the highest mark in that subject and grade in the province of Manitoba. Nate is a Grade 3 student at Sigurbjorg Stefansson Early School (Gimli) and studies private piano with

Brenda Gulay of Arborg.

# Gimli, Fraserwood firefighters team up to save family home

**By Gloria Thomas** 

The heroic efforts of Interlake firefighters were on display last month as a pair of neighbouring departments worked together to battle an inferno that leveled multiple buildings near Gimli.

Firefighters from the Gimli and Fraserwood Fire Departments responded to a property on Provincial Road 231, between highways 8 and 9, around 2:15 p.m. on Dec. 17, said Gimli's deputy fire chief Ken Arnason.

Crews arrived to find one building completely engulfed in flames, with the blaze beginning to spread to another. The heat was so fierce it charred cinder blocks, melted the front of a nearby car and caused materials inside the burning buildings to burst from the pressure, he said.

Wind gusts of 50 kilometres per hour fuelled the flames, which soared up to 30 feet tall and threatened neighbouring buildings.

"The guys did a great job because with such a high wind it could have taken the house," Arnason said. "They were there around the clock, and continued to monitor the site long after the fire was out."

Property owners Richard and Shelley Petrowski were in Winnipeg at the time of the fire but were alerted to the emergency by friends and family. The pair rushed back to find their garage and an attached shed burning and two full complements of firefighters on hand.

The South Felsendorf school (1901-1957), which was once located on Highway 231 near the Gimli Yard, was one of the buildings damaged in the fire. The structure was moved to the family homestead by Richard Petrowski's father, Edwin, in the late



Fuelled by strong winds, the flames soared to 30 feet high at some points — large enough to be spotted by passing motorists on Provincial Road 231.

1960s. The school, which was situated behind the house and used as storage throughout the years, was reduced to rubble.

Although the property damage was devastating, the family is grateful that the house was untouched and that the children, who were home at the time, were uninjured, Richard said.

"We did not have insurance and we had 50 years of stuff in those buildings," he said, adding the family is now picking through piles of rubble in an attempt to salvage anything that survived the blaze.

It is unclear what caused the fire; however, there is no indication of foul play.

There will be no investigation by the Office of the Fire Commissioner as there was no insurance.

In a public Facebook message, the Petrowskis extended sincere thanks to the collaborating fire departments for their quick response and incredible skill.

"We all know you cannot thank a fireman without thanking their families. I have no words to describe how



**EXPRESS PHOTOS BY GLORIA THOMAS** 

Charred ash and rubble is all that remains of an outbuilding on the Petrowski property near Gimli after a fire broke loose on the afternoon of Dec. 17.



Intense heat expelled by the flames caused the front end of a sedan parked nearby to melt.

grateful I am for the sacrifice you make," the post said.

## First baby of the year celebrated at Selkirk Regional Health Centre

Submitted by IERHA

The first baby of 2024 has arrived in Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority.

Safia Sharif and her husband Talal Tasse of East St. Paul welcomed their daughter Reham at 11:14 p.m. New Year's day at Selkirk Regional Health Centre.

Weighing seven pounds and 15 ounces, she is the Tasse family's third child. Excited to meet their baby sister were brother Zyad, 10, and sister Reem, 9.

The Tasses said their experience in the obstetric unit was unsurpassed.

"The staff were very helpful. It

was quiet and this has been the most comfortable room for us," Sharif said.

Tasse noted the attentiveness of staff.

"Whenever she was uncomfort-

"Whenever she was uncomfortable, there was always someone there to take care of her," Tasse said.

Betty Milkowski, chair of the Selkirk Hospital Gift Shop volunteers, maintained a tradition by gifting Reham's family with a hand-knit outfit and blanket, diapers, a hamper, playpen and other items to celebrate the arrival the first baby to arrive at the health centre. She said the volunteers make the New

Year's baby gift tradition possible.

"The most important thing is all the work that the volunteers do to help us. They make it possible for us to donate and help. This has been going on since the first hospital was built in Selkirk and the original ladies auxiliary was founded. We extend our best wishes to the family," Milkowski said.

Dr. Jennifer Preun attended the delivery. In 2023, 444 babies were born at Selkirk Regional Health Centre. That's an increase over the 397 babies born in 2022.

Anyone interested in delivering with Selkirk's obstetrics unit is invited to call 204-482-5800 for more



**PHOTO SUBMITTED** 

The Tasse family with Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority's first baby of the year (left to right): Talal, Zyad, Safia with Reham, Reem and grandmother Maria.

information and to arrange a tour of the facility.

## Eriksdale farm offers fairytale experience with horse-drawn sleigh rides

By Becca Myskiw

It's something out of a fairytale the horses harnessed up to the sleigh, pulling it through the white, fluffy snow as the bells on their ropes jingle, carrying you along. They take you through the woods, out into the vast prairie landscape and past cows grazing on hay.

The sleigh rides at Heavy Gate Farm provide a unique experience near Eriksdale. The farm, known for its beef and grain production, introduced the picturesque rides with their Clydesdale horses last year. This season has already begun on a busy note.

Clydesdales are among the tallest horse breeds, originally bred in Scotland for heavy farm and industrial work. Clydesdales are large and strong with well-endowed legs that feather by the hooves. They're alert and calm, making the Clydesdale horse suitable for riding.

Combine that with their work abilities; they're the perfect horse to pull

Arlene Brandson Darknell and David Darknell run Heavy Gate Farm. The couple got their first two Clydesdale horses in 2014: yearlings Dawne and Rayne. David worked tirelessly to harness break the horses himself, and 10 years later, they're the farm's leading team for pulling the sleigh.

This year, though, 12-year-old Tan-

go pulls the sleigh with Dawne while Rayne rests and raises her foal. The lack of snow has also caused the pair to pull the wagon through the trails instead of the sleigh, and it's caused the route for the rides to change slightly. Instead of taking the winding trails Arlene and David cleared through their farm, the route right takes people through the hay yard, past the cattle and different parts of the farm.

"We wanted to offer not just a sleigh ride, but we wanted to offer an experience with that," said Arlene, noting the ride takes people past their cattle so they can learn more about agriculture and life on the farm.

Each sleigh ride costs \$15 per person and lasts for 20 minutes, though it'll feel like much less when you're taking it all in. Once it's done, there's a warmup shack for people to use, complete with hot chocolate and bonfires for them to enjoy with each other.

Each ride has to be booked in advance so Heavy Gate Farm can ensure their horses aren't overworked and so they can keep track of the schedule and numbers each day. One ride can take 10 people, and you can sign up in groups or individually. The wagon is also accessible. Every day is weatherand horse-dependent, so pre-booking also lets the farm keep in contact with



**EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED** 

Heavy Gate Farms, just outside of Eriksdale, is offering sleigh rides with their Clydesdale horses.

people, letting them know if they must postpone any days.

Arlene and David plan to keep offering the sleigh rides until the weekend of Feb. 10 when they'll start preparing for the calving season.

"I think it just connects people with nature and also farm life," said Arlene. "And it's something in the area

for everyone to do."

Heavy Gate Farm is planning to keep adding family-friendly activities and start offering their horse-drawn wagon rides in the fall. To keep up to date with them and to get in contact, follow their Facebook page at Heavy Gate Farm.

# Funds announced to aid unsheltered Manitobans during winter

The Manitoba government, led by Housing, Addictions and Homelessness Minister Bernadette Smith, has committed to taking tangible measures in tackling homelessness. A fund of \$5.7 million will be allocated in stages to aid those who are currently experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness during the winter season.

According to Smith, homelessness is a complex problem that involves poverty, trauma, discrimination, mental health and addictions. Furthermore, the current low-vacancy rates and high housing costs exacerbate the issue. The provincial government is dedicated to collaborating with government officials at all levels to alleviate this pressing need by constructing more social and affordable housing options and providing comprehensive support services to help individuals maintain stable housing.

The minister has revealed Manitoba's plan to allocate over \$2.8 million in Phase 1 funding for the development of supportive housing with

wraparound services. This initiative will provide up to 250 rental units in cities such as Winnipeg, Brandon, Swan River and Portage la Prairie. The residential properties will consist of a mix of Manitoba Housing, nonprofit and private market rentals, all supported by rent supplements.

In the upcoming year, phase two initiatives aimed at supporting women and LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals will be unveiled. These plans are being spearheaded by a newly formed collaborative action circle, co-chaired by the minister and Southern Chiefs' Organization's mobile crisis response team lead, Carol McCorrister. This group consists of members from various Indigenous organizations, homeless-serving sectors, and women's groups across Manitoba. Once the winter response is completed, their attention will shift towards creating a provincewide plan to aid homeless women and gender-diverse individuals in finding permanent housing, as stated by the minister.

According to Jason Whitford, CEO

of End Homelessness Winnipeg, these investments demonstrate a firm dedication and prompt response towards tackling important issues. Recent events have emphasized the need to prioritize support for Indigenous women, highlighting the valuable efforts of our various community-based organizations in effectively addressing these challenges with co-ordinated care and compassion.

According to the minister, there will be additional housing developments in the future through collaboration with various government partners. The current short-term plan is the most substantial provincial investment ever made toward addressing homelessness during winter.

"Our government has a simple goal and an immense task - ending chronic homelessness in Manitoba," said Smith. "We can only solve this collaboratively with all levels of government and the community organizations tirelessly supporting unsheltered relatives, no matter their circumstance."

During the months of November and December 2023, the Manitoba government reached out to various entities, including agencies, municipal governments and Indigenous governments throughout the province. The purpose was to gather input on a prompt provincial solution to support unsheltered Manitobans this winter. Emphasis was placed on those who are most vulnerable, such as women, children and LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals. The resulting winter response plan reflects the insights and recommendations gathered through these consultations.

The new collaborative action circle includes a variety of partners, such as End Homelessness Winnipeg, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Sunshine House, Ka Ni Kanichihk, Southern Chiefs' Organization, Mount Carmel Clinic and Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre. More partners may also be added through ongoing consultations.

Phase 2 is expected to be announced in early 2024, noted the minister.

# SDOPTS&recreation INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

# Ice Dawgs, Falcons begin 2024 with games

#### **Bv Brian Bowman**

The Arborg Ice Dawgs began the new years with a 6-2 loss to the Selkirk Fishermen last Sunday in Sagkeeng.

Selkirk, which scored three goals in the first period and then three more in the third, received two tallies from Matt Wagner and singles by Raymond Hefferman, Matt Brooks, Izzy Aime and Anthony Bruyere.

Austin Adair and Dainen Jacobson replied for Arborg.

Marcus Sharpe made 23 saves for the win.

Arborg will host the improving North Winnipeg Satelites Friday (8 p.m.) and then visit the Lundar Falcons Saturday (7 p.m.).

On Jan. 2, the Ice Dawgs were

blanked 4-0 by the North Winnipeg Satelites.

North Winnipeg goals were scored by Logan Ashe in the second period and Dylan Care, Kayden Buffalo and Emerson Veloso in the third.

Arborg and Lundar then had their game on Jan. 5 postponed.

The Falcons were edged 4-3 at home last Saturday by the Beausejour Com-

ets.

Cayson McCreedy, Morgan Mantik, and Liam Russell scored for the Falcons.

Satellites goals came from Clint Thomas (two), Jarvis Ewasko and Tanner Amos.

Lundar's next game is Friday in Beausejour against the Comets. Game time is 8 p.m.

# **U18 AAA Interlake Lightning teams earn wins**

#### By Brian Bowman

The U18 AAA male Interlake Lightning split a pair of games with the Kenora Thistles in northwestern Ontario last weekend.

On Sunday afternoon, Interlake blew a 4-0 second-period lead in a tough 6-5 loss to Kenora.

Drew Russell (two), James Franklin, Mason Bernier and Ian Buors scored in the losing cause.

Thistles' goals were tallied by Tallon Caren (two), Callum McCormick, Bo Gartzke, Cole Bodner and Hudson Gagne.

Saturday evening saw the Lightning defeat the Thistles 4-1.

Franklin, Brandon Burak, Jeremy Kawiuk, and Lucas Spencer scored for Interlake.

Carter Peters answered for Kenora. Dylan McFadyen stopped 35 shots for the victory.

Last Wednesday, Interlake downed the Winnipeg Wild 3-1 in Teulon.

After a scoreless first period, the Lightning's Buors and Talon Hogg tallied in the second.

Winnipeg's William Marceus and Hogg traded goals in the third.

Lightning netminder Alex Myers was outstanding, making 42 saves.

Interlake, in third place with 38 points, will host the Pembina Valley Hawks on Saturday (7:30 p.m.) and the Parkland Rangers Sunday (1:30 p.m.) in Teulon.

The U18 AAA female Lightning, meanwhile, played a great game in a 2-1 road win over the Winnipeg Avros last Saturday.

Interlake trailed 1-0 in the third pe-

riod but scored a pair of goals for the comeback win.

Lightning scorers were Claire Hudson and Charleen Wong while Rory Lubkey replied for the Avros.

Rachel Halldorson made 37 saves for the win.

Interlake will host the Yellowhead Chiefs on Saturday (7:30 p.m.) in Stonewall and then take on the Pembina Valley Hawks Sunday (2:30 p.m.) in Morden.



# Men's bonspiel winners

The Eriksdale Curling Club hosted a Men's Bonspiel on Jan. 5 and 6 with twelve teams. The first event was won by Robi Lewarne, Austin Hanslip, Ethan Spalding and Alex Ryden. The Shane Bauch team from Moosehorn won the second event and the Larry Weatherburn team from Eriksdale won the third event.

A special thank you to Ethan Spalding for organizing the bonspiel and to all the generous sponsors who helped with its success.

**EXPRESS PHOTO BY DONNA POOL** 



# set inspired Ask the money lady MEAL IDEAS Thursday, January 11, 2024 15



Prep time: 5 minutes Cook time: 30 minutes Servings: 6-8

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 large white or yellow onion, finely chopped

1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus additional, to taste (optional)

1 package (9 ounces) Cacique Pork Chorizo

2 teaspoons smoked paprika

1 teaspoon dried Mexican oregano

1 container (16 ounces) Cacique Medium Homestyle Salsa

1 quart chicken stock

2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs or breasts, trimmed of excess fat and diced

1 can (25 ounces) white hominy, drained and rinsed

1 lime, cut into wedges

## **Smoky Chorizo** and Chicken **Pozole**

3/4 cup crumbled Cacique Ranchero Queso Fresco

1/2 cup chopped cilantro

In large, heavy pot over medium heat, heat oil. Reserve 1/4 cup onion for garnish; add remaining onion to pot and season with salt. Saute until translucent, about 5 minutes.

Increase heat to medium-high; add pork chorizo and break it apart with spoon. Cook chorizo undisturbed until deeply browned and cooked through, 3-5 minutes. Add smoked paprika and oregano; cook 30 seconds, or until fra-

Pour in salsa and scrape up browned bits from bottom of pan. Bring to simmer 1-2 minutes, allowing it to thicken slightly then add stock and bring to simmer.

Stir in diced chicken and hominy. Decrease heat to medium and cook 8-10 minutes until chicken is cooked through. Taste and season with more salt, if necessary. Remove from heat.

Serve bowls of pozole with reserved onion, lime wedges, crumbled queso fresco and chopped cilantro.



Prep time: 35 minutes Cook time: 40 minutes

Servings: 10

3 pounds russet potatoes (about 9 medium potatoes), peeled and cubed water

6 bacon strips, chopped

1 package Cacique Pork Chorizo

12 ounces Cacique Crema Mexicana

1/2 cup butter, cubed

11/2 teaspoons onion powder

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1/2 teaspoon pepper

1 cup Cacique Oaxaca or Queso Quesadilla, shredded

1/2 cup Cacique Crema Mexicana Agria, for topping (optional)

3 green onions, chopped

## **Mexican Loaded Mashed Potatoes**

In Dutch over, add potatoes and cover with water. Bring to boil. Reduce heat; cook, uncovered, 10-15 minutes, or until tender.

In skillet over medium heat, cook bacon until crisp. Drain on paper towels, chop into small pieces and set aside. Remove bacon grease from skillet and cook chorizo over medium-high heat, 6-8 minutes.

Drain potatoes; add to pan. Mash potatoes, gradually adding crema Mexicana, butter, onion powder, salt, garlic powder and pepper. Transfer to greased 13-by-9-inch baking dish; sprinkle with cheese, chorizo and bacon. Refrigerate, covered, up to 1 day.

Preheat oven to 350 F. Remove potatoes from refrigerator and let stand while oven heats. Bake, covered, about 30 minutes. Uncover; bake 10 minutes, or until heated through.

Drizzle with crema Mexicana agria and chopped green onions.

December is the eat and spend too much month and January is the go on a diet and pay your bills month.

So, have you decided to really create a budget this year to get your finances in order? Or is it going to be like that gym membership you'll sign up for that will fizzle out by March because you just can't find the time to go. I know we all have the best intentions to do things at the beginning of a New Year, but then life gets in the way, challenges come up and we give in to the failure of our January goals yet again. According to a recent study done by Stats Canada, (September 2023) three out of five Canadians are dealing with debt. So don't beat yourself up if you have debt too, especially after one of the most expensive months of the year. It can always be fixed. No matter what reason you had for going into debt - good or bad - You will want to have a strategy to repay it in full during the life of the asset or at least by the time you reach retirement. Here's how you're going to do it.

First you want to review all your options, so make a list of all the debt you currently have. You're going to want to categorize it into large and small debts; for example, it's going to be a lot easier to pay off a credit card for \$10,000 than it is to pay off a mortgage of \$200,000. Just list everything you owe so you can get a good understanding of what you are dealing with and if you have a lot of debt, (over \$100K in consumer debt) you may want to ask yourself: Could you downsize your home, refinance, or even change your job to earn more so you can reduce your debts?

Now when it comes to consumer or credit card debts the easiest and fastest method is to consolidate high interest loans into a new mortgage or a secured line of credit. Your goal is to capture a lower rate of interest so that you can increase your monthly cash flow. Obviously this should be viewed as a one-time credit fix and not something that you do every couple of years to drain the equity from your residence, use your home as an ATM and get a free pass to spend again. Also make sure your amortization on your mortgage matches with the date of your retirement (for example, if you have 15 years to retirement, your mortgage amortization should also be 15 years).

But, what if you don't own a home, and you still have debt? Well, we're going to have to do it the old-fash-



**Christine Ibbotson** 

ioned way. Take that list of all your debts and decide which one you're going to tackle first. You will want to concentrate on putting as much as you can down on this debt every month, (for example a credit card balance) whilst only paying the minimum payments on the other debts that you have. Once this debt is paid off, then move to the next one, repeating the process of paying down one and maintaining the others with only minimum payments. This process takes a lot longer to accomplish and can be quite frustrating at times, but it does teach you how to create new habits for saving and definitely helps you learn how to budget for 2024.

Now if you still can't resolve your debt situation because there is too much to handle - declaring bankruptcy should be viewed as a last resort. You want to make sure you've exhausted all other solutions before contemplating a bankruptcy or consumer proposal. Please don't think that a consumer proposal won't be as bad as a bankruptcy. They both will hit your credit bureau and drop your score once initiated. But if all else fails and you must declare bankruptcy to get you back on the road to financial recovery, don't worry too much, your credit rating can be restored. Once the bankruptcy has been settled and cleared, you will want to begin reestablishing good credit right away. It could take up to three years to do so, but remember you've got to get back in the game. So, don't be afraid to use credit again. Remember your credit score is the only way to measure your credit worthiness not just for the banks, but also investment firms, insurance companies, some employers, security checks and rental housing.

Written by Christine Ibbotson. Send your questions through her website at askthemoneylady.ca

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**RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF ARMSTRONG** 

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL** OFFICE BATHROOM RENOVATION

The Council of the Rural Municipality of Armstrong is accepting proposals for a bathroom renovation at the Municipal office located in Inwood, Manitoba.

Viewing of scope of work expectation can be made at the office M-F 8:30am-4:30pm, please call the office to make an appointment to view.

Contractors will be responsible for providing a submission that accurately describes the scope of work including details of expected labor and materials. All permits, licenses and fees required to complete the project will be the sole responsibility of the successful bidder.

The lowest or any bid not necessarily accepted. The contractor must be in good standings with the RM of Armstrong to be considered and will be required to provide proof of liability

Proposal Close: 4:30 PM, Friday, January 26th, 2024.

Nancy Howell / Interim CAO RM of Armstrong Lot 55 Highway 17 Box 69, Inwood, MB ROC 1PO cao@rmofarmstrong.com Phone: 1-204-278-3377

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## **MORTGAGE SALE**

The land and building known as NW7-18-3E, in the Rural Municipality of Armstrong, Manitoba, as described in Certificate of Title No. 2797291/1 will be sold at auction on Wednesday the 7th day of February, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. The auction sale will be held by way of video or teleconference. There will be no inperson attendees at the auction. In order to participate you must pre-register at least 24 hours prior to the auction by contacting Dan Ransom at either 204-988-0443 or dransom@tmlawyers. com. On the date of the auction, an email will be sent to all attendees at the email addresses provided. The attendees will need to follow the instructions in the email, which will include a video link or teleconference call-in information. The successful bidder shall have a period of 24 hours to provide the deposit in certified funds payable to Taylor McCaffrey LLP and sign the auction sale conditions.

Title No. 2797291/1

Land Description: NW7-18-3E

Civic Address/Location: 103143 Road, 12 East. The property is located on an exterior lot of two rural roads in the Rural Municipality of Armstrong, approximately 10 Kms from the Community of Komarno. Head East on Highway 229 from Komarno to Road 12 East, then North 2 miles or North of Komarno to Road 104 North, then East 2 miles or #7 Highway to Road 104 North, then East on 104 for 2.5 miles.

TO THE BEST of the Vendor's knowledge, this parcel consists of approximately 155.44 acres. There is a Single Family Detached Bungalow, 3 bedroom, 2 1/2 bathroom house built in 2015, with approximately 2,599 square feet of living space. The house has a living room, dining room, family room, laundry room and kitchen. There are several outbuildings which include a machine shop, barn, 7 sheds and a secondary home (24 x 16). There is a single driveway for parking and a Double Detached Garage that is approximately 26 x 24.

PRIOR ENCUMBRANCES: Caveat No. 2425161/1 REALTY TAXES (excluding any accruing water charges) are paid to December 31, 2021.

TERMS OF SALE: a deposit of \$60,000.00 by way of cash, certified cheque or bank draft payable to Taylor McCaffrey LLP, and the balance according to conditions which will be available for public view at the Auctioneer's address above prior to the auction. The property will be sold subject to a Reserve Bid of \$420,000.00 plus such other additional and incidental costs which may be incurred by the Vendor from the 4th day of January, 2024 to the date of auction and which costs will be announced prior to the commencement of the sale. The maximum amount of cash that may be provided as part of the deposit is \$7,500.00. The auction sale will be conducted pursuant to an Order for Sale issued by the District Registrar. Certain parties may be prohibited from purchasing the property, including but not limited to, parties who by virtue of their employment or relationship to a person involved in the sale process would have special knowledge of the circumstances pertaining to the sale. For more information and a list of prohibited purchasers please visit: www.teranetmanitoba.ca.

FURTHER information may be obtained from:

TAYLOR McCAFFREY LLP

2200 - 201 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 3L3 **ATTENTION:** Daniel Ransom Phone No.: 204-988-0443 File No.: 114473-168

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Edward Bernier - The family of Edward Bernier would like to express their sincere thanks to the RCMP, Ambulance responders, doctor and nurses at the Percy E. More Hospital. We thank you all for the cards, phone calls, flowers, baking, support and offers of help at this difficult time. We deeply appreciate your expression of sympathy.

No farewell words were spoken, No time to say goodbye. You were gone before we knew it, And only God knows why.

 Colleen Bernier and families

#### **CARD OF THANKS**

We would like to thank all those who helped us out during my stay in the hospital. To Lynn and Wilf Carbonneau, Keith and Margaret, Wallace and Judy Hickman, Sandy Bankert and family and Kim Collie for the visits, food and general concern. Special thanks to Sandy Smith for driving and taking great care of us and Adeline and Alison Raw for being there for us. Thanks also to many others for their generous offers and kind thoughts. We are very grateful for the amazing community of friends and family. Wishing you all a happy and healthy new year. -Violet and Lawrence Raw

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A big thank you to our family and friends for helping celebrate our 90th birthdays. Hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.

-Eddie and Louise Sigurdson

#### BIRTHDAY



Helen Wallack Ninety-five (95) years on January 2! You look great! Wishing you a very Happy Birthday Mom!

> -With much love from all your family!

#### **IN MEMORIAM**

Barb Sawa Arnason April 11 1960 - January 15 2023



Your life leaves a trail of beautiful memories. Thank you for the memories dearest Barb. You will always be in our hearts. -From those of us who are so fortunate to know you

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#### **OBITUARY**

**Cameron Donald Peter Penny** April 20, 1953 - January 4, 2024

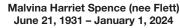
Suddenly on January 4, 2024 at the Lakeshore General Hospital in Ashern, MB with his loving wife Phyllis of 44 years by his side, Cameron Donald Peter Penny, age 70 years of Eriksdale, MB passed away.

A celebration of his life is being planned for the spring of 2024.

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#### OBITUARY



After a brief illness, with her daughter Fern-Marie at her side, Malvina, at level 92, started her next journey to the after life.

Malvina was born June 21, 1931 in Crane River, MB. One half of twins, she was only 2 pounds when she arrived, but she was a fighter from birth until her passing. Malvina contacted TB in her adolescence and had to stay in a sanitarium for quite some time. She then spent time with the Shuttleworth family with whom she remained close until her passing. In the 50's she met the love of her life, Clifford. They married September 1961 and were married for 44 years until his passing in 2006. Malvina and Clifford spent a few years in Vancouver before relocating to Thompson, MB in 1969 with their daughter Fern-Marie.

Malvina worked several jobs during her younger years. In 1973

she started work at the Thompson Day Care Center where she looked after the little ones until her retirement in 1999. She was proud of her work and had a tremendous work ethic. After retiring, Malvina and Clifford settled into country life in Ashern, MB. Malvina was known for her immaculate attire at all times. In her purse, she always had Kleenex, lipstick and a nail file 'just in case'. She was a true natural beauty...a lady to the end.

She leaves to mourn her passing her only child, daughter Fern-Marie James (Derrick) of Ashern, her grandchildren Stacey, Shayne and Selina, great-grandchildren Ariel, Aaron, Shylah, Joel, Clifford, Donovan, Kaylee and Payton. Malvina also leaves to mourn three sisters Alice, Margaret and baby sister Julyda whom she had a special bond with, a sister-in-law Violet and dear friend Sandra Degroot along with numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

Malvina was predeceased by her husband Clifford, parents Roderick and Margaret, brothers Emile, Edward and wombmate George, sisters Christine and Mary.

Funeral Mass will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 13, 2024 in the Holy Cross Catholic Church, Ashern, MB with Father Paul Tinguely officiating. Eulogy will be read by Dawn Tober. Interment will be held in the Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery, Ashern, MB with a lunch to follow in the Ashern Legion Hall.

Active pallbearers will be nephews Joey Lagimodiere and Larry Flett and great-grandsons Aaron Spence, Joel Slater, Clifford Fontaine and Donovan Defoort.

Honorary pallbearers will be Julyda Lagimodiere and Sandra Degroot.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Health Sciences Centre Foundation, PW-112-700 William Ave, Winnipeg, MB R3E 0Z3.

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To all the volunteers and businesses who helped us provide a safe ride home we say a big...



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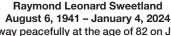


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#### **OBITUARY**



Dad passed away peacefully at the age of 82 on January 4th with his girls by his side.

Dad was predeceased by his wife Andrea; parents Evelyn and Leonard; in-laws Alice and Jim Harley; brother Jim; in-laws Victor Bazinet, Victor Lamoureux, Rosie Sweetland, Dave Larade, and Jean Paul Klyne.

Left to mourn are daughters Trin (Keith) Willetts and Tanis (Paul) Woods; grandson Kyle (Marquita) Willetts; great-grandchildren Loki, Ember, Pearl, Odin, Paige and Liam; siblings Helen Bazinet, Doreen Lamoureux, Ken (Wendy), Vida (Roy) Lucier and Joan Larade; in-laws Lorne (Lois) Harley, Val (Rick) Willetts, Evelyn Harley and Adele Harley (Ron Gauthier) as well as many many cousins, nieces, nephews, friends and honorary family members.

Dad grew up in Lundar, MB and met Mom when he was 19. They celebrated 55 years of marriage before losing Mom. He worked for the City of Winnipeg as a Water Supply Worker, retiring in 1996 to move back to Eriksdale to enjoy farming and volunteering in his retirement. He loved his family, horses, pets and wildlife. Dad was very active in the community, always willing to give a helping hand and was known for his sense of humour. He was very talented and hard working. Growing up we always thought that he could do anything. Dad was the best dad ever and generous to a fault.

Family would like to thank all home care workers for their care and compassion. Special thanks to Shirley and Kathy, Cindy, Sandra, Stefanie and Destiny who treated Dad so well. Thanks also to the staff at the Eriksdale Hospital and Arborg PCH who took such good care of Dad. Thanks to Lena and Carla who made a difficult time much much easier. Last, but certainly not least, a big thank you to Drs Faragala and Young who went above and beyond to help get Dad comfortable and the care he needed...we will always remember this. A very special thank you to Auntie Doreen for her love and companionship.

A Memorial Service will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, January 12, 2024 in the Eriksdale Recreation Centre with Shirley Russell officiating. A luncheon will be held with an interment to follow in the Eriksdale Municipal Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in his honour to CancerCare Manitoba Foundation Inc., 675 McDermot Ave., Room ON 1160, Winnipeg, MB R3E 0V9 or a community group of

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## **PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE**

## **Fairford Dam Fishway Project**

You are invited to attend a public open house hosted by Landmark Planning & Design Inc. on behalf of Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI) to receive an update on the Fairford Dam Fishway project.

MTI has evaluated options for a new fishway at the Fairford Dam (Fairford River Water Control Structure).

We wish to meet with you to share information and to understand your point of view.

MONDAY, JANUARY 22<sup>ND</sup>, 2023 (Drop-In) 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**Moosehorn Community Hall** Railway Ave, Moosehorn, MB

To RSVP, please email to RSVP@landmarkplanning.ca with the subject line "Fairford Dam" or via telephone at 204-453-8008.































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