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Reading buddies

Fisher Branch Early Year students Mithos Villanueva, left, and Emmy Bird-Copenace read together to kick off I Love to Read Month.

EXPRESS PHOTO BY ROGER MCCULLEY

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Benson back in China amid Corona Virus outbreak

By Teresa Carey

A Gimli fisherman, author and the man behind the Flag of Humanity has been in China since Jan. 3, teaching English, picking up trash and promoting his flag — which represents the passing on of the Earth to the next generations in a spirit of global peace.

This is Bruce Benson's second trip to China. He journeyed there last year to introduce his flag to the Chinese people, and tirelessly picked up garbage to prove his authenticity and sincerity to them while there. He has been carrying on with his daily trash pickup while Thomas English School, where he is employed, is closed for break — despite the fact that streets all around him are deserted.

"Most of my Chinese friends are just staying inside. Streets are ominously devoid of people, by normal Chinese standards. (The) government has said schools do not reopen until they say so," Benson relayed through a series of private Facebook messages and by email.

"Things are getting a little scary over here in China," he said. "I feel like I'm in a movie, a post-apocalyptic one, not a fun one like *The Hangover*."

Benson is staying in Jinan, Shandong province, located about 850 kilometres from Wuhan, the epicenter of the corona virus outbreak, which some experts are now calling a potential pandemic. The virus has come to Jinan, but that city has not been shut down as other Chinese cities have been.

"The headmaster of my school sent me a video of the hazmat men and women taking someone out of

a building very close to where I am now," Benson said. "Sections of Jinan have now been shut off, and some apartment complexes have posted guards to keep strangers away, including my own. Everybody that can, has a mask on. Before this it was one in five by my estimation. Now it's nearly 100 per cent. Everybody that can is staying inside."

In Wuhan, the situation is far more dramatic, Benson said.

"A friend showed me a video of a hospital in Wuhan, corridors full of people, all wearing masks, three dead bodies on the floor that apparently stayed there for 12 hours before being removed. There was a lot of screaming and yelling and crying on the video. I hope my friends in Wuhan are alright. Me, I'm wondering what the ... am I doing here," he said.

Benson believes he can leave if he wants to. However, his passion for the Flag of Humanity is what keeps him in China for now, until the spring when he plans to return home for fishing season.

"There is at least one positive that can come out of this. Considering how fast the virus has spread across our little blue dot, it has become apparent that we are all in this together. We must be our brother's keeper if we are to survive. What happens in one corner can affect us all. But that lesson has been taught by every virus that has gone international," Benson said.

"Perhaps it's times like this when an understanding of the commonality of being human is most important."



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Bruce Benson has been in China since early January. He holds his Flag of Humanity in front of the tallest building in Jinan, Shandong province, where he is staying while teaching English. The street, normally very busy, is now deserted because of the corona virus outbreak.

Gimli man gauging interest in starting a men's-only anxiety support group

By Patricia Barrett

A Gimli man who says he's been dealing with anxiety and depression for years is gauging interest in the Interlake region for a support group exclusively for men.

Warren Hill takes part in a program offered by the Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba (ADAM), which holds monthly group meetings in Selkirk, Stonewall and Gimli.

The group Hill attends in Gimli has about a dozen attendees and is made up of mostly women, he said. A men's-only support group may make men feel more comfortable about discussing mental health issues.

"I know a lot of guys aren't willing to share," said Hill. "And if you put them in a mixed crowd, they might even become more apprehensive to share."

Hill was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder when he was a volunteer firefighter and had been dealing with a "collective amount of stress" over a six- to eight-month period, he said. He would wake up every morning wondering what was going to happen to him and what the day would bring. And there weren't a lot of "healthy" supports out there for men struggling with anxiety.

Men typically "go out with their buddies, have some beers and moan about things, but that doesn't get them anywhere," said Hill, who worked as a butcher and also as a writer over the course of his career. It's no secret guys are "poorly adapted" when it comes to talking about their feelings.

"I struggled with it in the wrong way for years," he said. "And in the last few years, I finally came around, knowing that I'm not the only person to feel this way and wondering how can I better deal with it."

People struggling with mental illness can often suffer in silence, fearing ostracization or being negatively labelled. A support group brings them into contact with others dealing with similar crises and provides an opportunity to share coping strategies.

One of the ways Hill said he coped was to "stay as busy as possible," which worked for a while. "But as I get older, I just don't have the energy to do that," he said.

Hill said he's discussed the men's-only group with his ADAM outreach worker and thinks the Gimli Health Centre may be willing to provide its

Continued on page 3



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Legion's Ladies Auxiliary gearing up for another year of community support

By Patricia Barrett

The Ladies Auxiliary of Arborg's Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 161 is gearing up for another year of fundraising activities to support their veterans and the community.

The members of auxiliary hold several fundraising initiatives each year to support various local and external organizations, the branch, the personal care home and to provide bursaries to Arborg Collegiate graduates.

"We're an active group of ladies who give all the money we make from fundraising to different community organizations," said auxiliary president Gail Blahey.

Ladies auxiliaries originated during the First World War to help wounded veterans and provide support to their families, according to the Royal Canadian Legion website. Auxiliaries advocate for veterans, provide help to their communities and support legion

activities. The Arborg Royal Canadian Legion was established in 1954. The Arborg area lost 17 men in the First World War and 26 in the Second World War.

"We do lots in the community. We visit the sick and give them gifts on Christmas and Mother's Day," said Blahey, "and we give gifts to the three veterans we have just so they know there's somebody thinking about them."

The auxiliary holds two major fundraisers each year. One is a Spring Tea and Fashion Show with clothing supplied by Johnson's store in Gimli. It will be held on Thursday, May 7. The other fundraising event — a pancake breakfast — will take place in July during the annual Arborg Fair and Rodeo.

The auxiliary also organizes a Poppy Campaign, with proceeds going to the legion, and helps with the Remem-



EXPRESS PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

The Arborg Royal Canadian Legion Branch 161.

brance Day service at the Arborg Hall, preparing lunch for the veterans and their families and the cadets. It also provides hampers and holds a gift certificate raffle at Christmas.

Over the course of 2019, the auxiliary supported the Salvation Army, Deer Lodge Hospital, the Arborg Royal Canadian Legion, the Christmas Cheer Board, the local Seniors Resource Centre's adult day care program, the Arborg personal care home, an adult mental health program run by the government, a memory fund through

to help branch members' families who have suffered a loss and also provided two bursaries worth \$500 each to Arborg Collegiate students.

"The total of all those donations last year came to \$4,000," said Blahey.

The auxiliary is currently welcoming new members to its group, which meets on the last Monday of the month at 1:30 p.m. Many of the ladies are life members, having served for 15 years and more.

Call Gail Blahey at 204-376-5163 for more information about how to join.

Fisher Branch RCMP respond to vehicle-pedestrian collision

Submitted by RCMP

On Feb. 1, 2020, at 6:05 p.m., officers from the Fisher Branch RCMP responded to a report of a vehicle-pedestrian collision that occurred on West Road, located approximately two kilometres north of Highway 17, in Peguis First Nation.

Officers attended the collision and located the victim, a 52-year-old male from Peguis, on the roadway who appeared to have been struck by a vehicle that failed to remain at the scene.

The victim was pronounced deceased at the scene.

It is believed the victim was struck by a northbound vehicle and the RCMP are asking anyone with information to contact the Fisher Branch RCMP at 204-372-8484, call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-8477 or secure tip online at www.manitobacrimestoppers.com.

Fisher Branch RCMP along with a forensic collision reconstructionist continue to investigate.

> SUPPORT GROUP, FROM PG. 2

multi-purpose room for meetings.

He'd like to keep the meetings relatively unstructured, he said, as it's tough to get men to open up.

"I don't have all the answers. I just know there are a lot of people that need help, especially in today's world where it's getting tougher and tougher to not get wound up and anxious," he said.

As for the possible numbers of meetings each month, Hill said he'd have to first figure out what the demand is. Meetings could be held once a month or once a week depending on how many men want to join.

"Men should realize that they're not alone. They're not the only person experiencing this," said Hill. "It's a tough battle, but the more support they have, the better the odds of get-

ting through it."

Those interested in forming a men's-only support group can call or text Warren Hill at 204-651-1157. He also posted a story on the RM-run Meanwhile in Gimli Facebook page, inviting men to get in touch with him about the support group.

For more information about the Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba, visit www.adam.mb.ca. The Interlake ADAM contact person is Sherry MacVicar, who can be reached at 204-389-5030.

The Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority provides a 24-hour crisis line for people experiencing mental health issues. Call the crisis line at (toll-free) 1-866-427-8628 or 204-482-5419.

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Manitoba premier announces disaster financial assistance

By Evan Matthews

After October's ice storm, those reeling in the RM of Grahamdale and across the province may now be provided some relief.

On Jan. 23, the province announced it will make disaster financial assistance (DFA) available for eligible municipalities — including Grahamdale — for homeowners, farms and small businesses impacted by the severe weather event.

"When a widespread natural disaster strikes and creates an unreasonable financial burden, DFA may be made available to help individuals and local authorities recover," said Premier Brian Pallister in a press release.

"The fall storm resulted in widespread damage, and the DFA program will help to cover the cost of response and recovery from the overall weather event," he said.

The October event did create an unreasonable financial burden, according to the RM of Grahamdale's municipal staff, as they said residents and farmers had to fuel generators since some were left without power for upwards of 14 days.

Frozen goods at the local grocery store had thawed, staff said as an example, but some residents reported other damages such as destroyed fences. The RM is encouraging all affected to apply for DFA, from the smallest costs to the largest.

DFA is generally available as a last resort for evacuations, municipal response costs, repairs to damaged infrastructure and non-insurable damage to principal residences and builds essential to the operation of farms and small businesses, according to the province.

The province is asking both home and business owners affected by the October event to seek assistance through private insurance claims first, and to carefully check insurance coverage to ensure they are protected against potential and relevant risks in their respective areas.

The federal government may also provide financial assistance to the province through DFA arrangements following large-scale natural disasters, as the premier noted the province is confident the impacts of the October event will qualify for federal funding.



EXPRESS PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

The October storm snapped the tops of transmission towers across the region, causing power outages throughout the Interlake.

The October storm also created the need to use the Red River Floodway for the first time ever in the fall, according to the premier, and the province previously announced a compensation program related specifically to the floodway.

Applications are available online at www.manitobaemo.ca or by calling the Emergency Measures Organizations at 204-945-3050, or by contacting the RM of Grahamdale office.

Manitoba government to end use of birth alerts as of April 1

By Manitoba government

As of April 1, child welfare and public health systems in Manitoba will be ready to more effectively and proactively

ly connect mothers with supports, and will no longer issue birth alerts for high-risk expectant mothers, Families Minister Heather Stefanson announced last Friday.

"To build a relationship with an at-risk mother and connect her with the programs and supports she needs, first we need to build trust," said Stefanson. "Birth alerts are having the opposite effect, discouraging moms and families from reaching out at a time when we most want to work with them. This decades-old practice will end in Manitoba, as part of our commitment to transform the child welfare system and connect families with community-based supports and services."

Birth alerts notify hospitals and other Child and Family Services (CFS) agencies of the need for further assessment before a newborn is discharged to the care of a parent who has been assessed as "high risk." The CFS Standards Manual provides direction on the practice of birth alerts. Birth alerts are issued by a CFS agency and distributed by the department.

Provincial child welfare standards will be updated to remove references to birth alerts and clearly state expectations for a stronger focus on building voluntary partnerships with parents to address their strengths and needs, which may include the creation of a safety plan, followed by referrals to existing community, cultural and health-care services as needed.

The province has already been working with

child welfare authorities, the health-care sector and other partners to lay the groundwork for moving away from birth alerts by April 1. This will help ensure systems are better integrated to provide comprehensive, wrap-around supports for mothers, children and families.

"Our priority is to help keep families together and reduce the number of children in care," said Stefanson. "We are shifting our focus toward better supports for expectant mothers including early interventions, reunification and better planning."

The minister noted the end of birth alerts will not affect the child welfare system's ability to protect children who are at risk of neglect or abuse. All Manitobans, including health-care providers, continue to have a legislated duty to report if they think a child is at risk.

Manitoba's decision to end birth alerts builds on the recommendations of the Child Welfare Legislative Review Committee. Indigenous leadership, including the Southern Chiefs Organization, Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, have also called for an end to this practice.

The Manitoba government continues to develop programs to help connect families with the supports they need. This includes Wednesday's launch of Granny's House, which will provide temporary, culturally safe respite care, as well as the Indigenous doula social impact bond led by the Southern First Nations Network of Care.



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"Building a Lasting Legacy"

Fisher Branch students encouraged to change the world

By Evan Matthews

Students at Fisher Branch Fisher Branch Early Years School and the Collegiate will be turning pages this month, during I Love to Read month.

Grade 2 and 3 teacher Angela Caines is organizing the early years school's I Love to Read initiatives, and said this year's theme focuses on improving the world around us.

"We'll be talking and reading a lot about how to protect the animals and our environment," said Caines, adding this year's theme — as planned by the Reading Council of Greater Winnipeg — is "Books for a Better World."

"Many of the books we'll be reading talk directly about how to be a better citizen, or how to reduce, reuse and recycle."

I Love to Read Month is a month-long celebration that is held each year to encourage reading, writing and sharing in the joy of literacy, according to the Reading Council of Greater Winnipeg, which is intended to encourage readers to start taking steps towards creating a better world for everyone.



Fisher Branch Early Years School students (from left to right) Anabella Vieira and Caleb Lumasac, Connor Garton and Reese Nahuliak, and Jared Vandersteen and Lucas Caron.

Some of the school's I Love to Read events include designing posters and book marks, a "teacher swap," beach day, pajama day and trivia Thursdays touching on Manitoba's endangered animals, according to Caines.

Fisher Branch Collegiate

It's not just the early year's school participating, as Fisher Branch Collegiate is doing a school-wide book club called "One School One Book."

The school is collectively reading *Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein, ac-

cording to teacher Amanda Garton, who said the staff sent home a pacing guide, which outlines which chapters need to be read by set dates.

"Everyone is encouraged to read the book at home or during their independent reading time at school," said Garton.

"Throughout the month we will ask trivia questions about the reading during our morning announcements, and students can win reading-related prizes."

Staff are reading the book as well,

and Garton said they will be informally discussing the book with students throughout the month.

The goal is to create a community of readers at school and at home, as people who read more read better, and people who are surrounded by peers who enjoy reading also tend to read more.

Improving literacy is a priority of the school division, too, and Garton said I Love to Read month is very much in line with the priority.

Amalgamation of five Manitoba commodity organizations to bring significant benefits to farmers

By the Manitoba government

Will a new organization soon represent all wheat, barley, corn, flax and sunflower producers in Manitoba?

The answer is in the hands of growers who will vote on the amalgamation proposal during the upcoming annual general and special meetings of the organizations who currently represent these individual crops.

Manitoba Crop Alliance, the name chosen for the not-for-profit group, will bring together Manitoba Wheat and Barley Growers Association, National Sunflower Association of Canada, Manitoba Corn Growers Association, Winter Cereals Manitoba Inc. and Manitoba Flax Growers Association.

"Some growers may not know that the five organizations proposing amalgamation currently share an office in Carman. They are already working together, the staff is just shared in different ways," explains Robert Misko, director for Manitoba Wheat and Barley Growers Association. "Amalgamating would really simplify things and clean up administrative overlap. We don't see any less staff working, we just see them more focused with clearly defined roles."

Misko, who farms 8,000 acres near Roblin, was part of the farmer-led steering committee that developed the proposal based on farmer member input during consultations in 2018 and 2019. He says the proposed amal-

gamation has many advantages for the more than 8,000 farmer members who represent over 40 percent of crop acres in the province.

"There's a benefit of working for the greater good on a co-operative basis. We can accomplish more, faster, if we all pull together. There's synergy benefits. There's financial benefits. There's agronomic benefits," he says.

Grassroots governance

Governance of the new organization will feature crop committees that will allow for continued focus on research and market development funding of crop-specific issues. The committees also provide an opportunity for a new generation of farmers to get involved at the grassroots level.

"The crop committees are going to be really amazing opportunities for younger farmers. It will be less intimidating for them to participate at a higher level. Once they get their feet wet and learn how boards operate, they may want to put their name forward to sit on the board of directors for the organization," says Myron Krahn, a member of the steering committee and past president of

Manitoba Corn Growers Association.

Krahn who grows wheat, oats, canola, soybeans, corn and winter cereals near Carman underscores that the Manitoba Crop Alliance will be farmer-director driven.

Efficient and effective

Danny Penner, a corn, soybean, edible bean, canola and wheat grower from Letellier, supports amalgamation.

"I feel the representation of farmers right now in these five organizations is far too fragmented. Many of the things that these organizations work on cross over boundaries into other organizations," he says. "If the dollars spent out of farmers' pockets are not properly managed, the only people who stand to lose, monetarily wise, are growers."

The amalgamated organization will be streamlined with just one bank account, one audit, one AGM and one

payroll. Lean and efficient operational management will reduce administrative overlap and pool resources to help ensure maximum investment of producer dollars in research, agronomy and market development.

"Amalgamation will provide a more efficient system, especially for some of the smaller organizations who currently have to put a lot of their check-off dollars towards administration and may not have many research dol-

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Culture change around mental health

By Evan Matthews

Last week, Canadians participated in the ninth annual Bell Let's Talk Day. The day saw a record 154,387,425 messages via social media in support of mental health, which translated to almost \$8 million in funds raised by Bell in support of mental health.

Starting in 2011, the day focuses around shedding the stigma that surrounds mental health, according to Bell, as stigma can often prevent those struggling with mental illness from seeking the help they need.

What is amazing, though, is how much the culture on this topic has shifted since 2011, largely due to initiatives like Bell Let's Talk Day. The stigma, so to speak, is being actively shed.

People have become more aware that language matters: saying "A person with schizophrenia," versus using terms like "schizo." Instead of saying someone is "crazy," we now say someone has "mental illness" or is "experiencing languishing mental health."

This brings people together versus

isolating them.

Kindness goes a long way, and checking in on those around us makes a difference. Asking people, "How can I help?" or "I've noticed you've been down lately. Is everything OK?" These may seem like trivial questions, but for many, these questions make a difference.

The Interlake is fortunate to have so many supportive communities and caring people.

It's worth reiterating these people exist, and if a person is struggling, they should reach out for help.

This week, we've talked about programs like Re-START and STAR (Southwest Teens at Risk). These types of programs exist to help. There are good people who work in the roles associated with helping our Interlake residents define their version of success and achieve their goals.

There is no shame in accessing these types of programs — rather, the opposite. We should be proud these programs exist and proud of those who access them.

The programs exist for a reason. In our fast-paced society, mental illness and languishing mental health is at an all-time high.

But you are never alone.

The conversation has shifted, and most health authorities — including the Interlake Eastern Regional Health Authority — is well aware of the importance surrounding mental health.

Mental health includes our emotional and social well-being, according to the IERHA, and it affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, build relationships, and make choices in our everyday lives.

Mental health is so important throughout every stage of our lives, from childhood through to adulthood, and the associated challenges affect us all and can create difficulties in thinking, mood, and behaviour.

But help is available, so don't hesitate to reach out for it.

If you or a loved one are in crisis, call the 24-hour crisis line toll free at 1-866-427-8628 or 204-482-5419.

Manitoba will have cleanest fuel standards in Canada

Submitted by Manitoba government

Manitoba will have the cleanest fuel standards in Canada by increasing the ethanol and biodiesel content of its transportation fuels as it implements its Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan, Premier Brian Pallister announced Tuesday, Jan. 21 during his dignitary address at the annual Manitoba Ag Days exhibition.

"We have the cleanest electricity in Canada already and soon we will have the cleanest fuels in Canada too," said Pallister. "Manitoba is leading the

country once again."

These new clean fuel standards will reduce Manitoba's emissions by almost 400,000 tonnes cumulatively over the next five years. This is the equivalent of taking 100,000 vehicles off of the road.

"Agriculture always has been and always will be the key to Manitoba's economic success," said Pallister. "As an important economic driver, our agriculture industry cannot take its foot off the gas, so we will make that gas greener."

Manitoba will increase the ethanol content requirement of gasoline to 10 per cent from 8.5 per cent, and the biodiesel content of diesel to five per cent from two per cent, the premier noted. Consultations with industry, stakeholders and all Manitobans will take place in the coming months and any necessary regulation changes will be made this spring, he added.

Following a meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau yesterday, the

Continued on page 10

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Province offers free park entry for month of February

Manitobans encouraged to take advantage of winter experiences in provincial parks

Submitted by Manitoba government

The Manitoba government will again offer free park entry for the entire month of February so Manitobans and visitors can take advantage of the many winter activities available in provincial parks at no cost, Conservation and Climate Minister Sarah Guillemard announced last Friday.

"The beauty of our provincial parks does not disappear in winter, so why not take advantage of this great opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors," Guillemard said. "It's a great chance to get the family together and leave the hustle and bustle of our busy lives behind to soak up all that our provincial parks have to offer."

Vehicle permits are not required in any provincial park in February, but

Snopasses are still required for snowmobiles using groomed trails in the parks, and entrance fees still apply in national parks. There are groomed trails in 13 provincial parks across the province for a variety of activities including cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, fat biking, snowshoeing and hiking. Paint Lake, Spruce Woods and Turtle Mountain provincial parks also offer outdoor skating areas, hockey rinks and toboggan hills.

Trail grooming reports are updated online every Thursday throughout the winter. Manitobans are encouraged to check trail conditions and weather forecasts before visiting parks to properly plan their outdoor adventure. Maps of winter trails and updated reports can be found at www.manitobaparks.com.

[manitobaparks.com](http://www.manitobaparks.com).

Park interpreters are offering several guided experiences this winter. Interpretive programs are free and offered year round in Birds Hill, Spruce Woods and Whiteshell provincial parks. Highlights for the month of February include:

- guided snowshoe treks in Birds Hill Provincial Park on Saturday, Feb. 1;
- a skijoring workshop in Spruce Woods Provincial Park on Saturday, Feb. 8;
- a wolf howl in Whiteshell Provincial Park on Saturday, Feb. 15;
- guided snowshoe treks in Whiteshell Provincial Park on Sunday, Feb. 2 and Sunday, Feb. 23;
- learn to ice fish session in Whiteshell Provincial Park on Monday, Feb. 17;
- a nature detectives program for families with preschool aged children in Birds Hill Provincial Park on Wednesday, Feb. 26;

dren in Birds Hill Provincial Park on Wednesday, Feb. 26;

- a winter family fun day at the winter recreation area in Spruce Woods Provincial Park on Saturday, Feb. 22; and
- a variety of drop-in family activities at the Spruce Woods Visitor Centre throughout the month.

More information on these events and other upcoming programs can be found under the events tab at the Manitoba Parks Facebook page at www.facebook.com/MBGovParks and online at www.manitobaparks.com.

Teachers can also book free guided school programs throughout the winter season. For more information on winter activities and interpretive programs in provincial parks, email ParkInterpretation@gov.mb.ca or visit www.manitobaparks.com.

Riddell Seed Company earns Ag Days award

By Jennifer McFee

Recognition cropped up for a Warren-based company at Manitoba Ag Days 2020.

The annual agricultural expo ran from Jan. 21 to 23 in Brandon to showcase agricultural production expertise, technology and equipment.

Craig Riddell of Riddell Seed Company said he usually attends the event as a spectator but this year they set up a booth as an exhibitor.

"We've been bringing to market a piece of farm equipment to be developed. We were lucky enough to get in their New Innovations Showcase, so we were displaying our product there for the whole show," he said.

"We got lots of exposure for our product. There was a good cross-section of people there so it was nice to be able to make that contact. Being involved in the seed business, we get out there for networking and making contacts in the seed industry."

Their new product, called the MeterVeyor, is an attachment for a grain bin that accurately and gently meters out seed for loading out precise quantities.



Craig Riddell

ties. It's also useful in controlling the flow rate of seed from a bin to allow for precise application of seed treatments.

"It was a good release point for this new product. We managed to win second place for the New Innovation categories, which was nice. It got us a little publicity," Riddell said.

"Certainly some of the commercial



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

The MeterVeyor won second place in the New Innovation category.

producers see Ag Days as the starting point for a new season where they're talking to a lot of the buyers for their products and equipment. It's a good place to make contacts if you need to plan something for the new year."

The overall show attendance was

about 45,000 people, with more than 10,000 people attending seminars.

Next year, the 44th Manitoba Ag Days 2020 will run from Jan. 19 to 21.

For more information about the MeterVeyor, visit www.meterveyor.com.

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The dream fight with a swordfish

Hello again, friends.

I hope you enjoyed last week's story of lifelong friends Tim Campbell and Gary Ostrowski who incessantly played tricks on each other. According to Tim, Gary may not have caught as many fish as he did, but there is a whole other side to this wonderful guy that now becomes my pleasure to share with you.

As I urged my truck down the steep access road to the Red River by Selkirk last Friday, I saw a group of students ice fishing. They milled about, some jigging lines in ice holes, others indulging in sporadic "horse play," while others snacked by a portable stove. Pulling up alongside the young anglers, a tall chap with a very distinctive hat that showed FISH NOW WORK LATER turned toward my open driver window.

"Tim, are you with this group?" I asked.

"No, I'm just fishing off to the side, watching my buddy Gary trying to control his school class," he said.

"When I wrote about you and Gary in my column last week, the fact that he's a teacher didn't come up!" I exclaimed.

I got out of my truck and walked through the crowd of students to a tall chap with a salt and pepper two-day old-beard who was showing some of the kids how to hook a minnow on properly.

"Hi Gary," I said, "I'm Arnie Weidl. I have to confess, I feel I know you from the stories your friend Tim gave me."

"Don't you believe his assertions that I can't catch fish," he said laughing as he shook my hand.

"What's all this about?" I asked casting my hand at the crowd.

"I'm a teacher at Elmwood School and I try to teach my kids how to ice fish safely while impressing upon them not to leave garbage on the ice. I have a picture chart of all the kinds of fish found in Manitoba and when one of the students catches one, they identify it from the chart," he elaborated.

"I hope you're not displeased with my making a little fun of your fishing abilities in my column?" I asked.

"No, it's all in good fun," he laughed. "Besides I still maintain I catch as many fish over the space of a year as Tim does!"

Later, leaving, I shook Gary's hand. As I climbed into my truck, I was thrilled to hear the rousing farewell hoots and cheers from his students!

Over the years, I have known many Manitoba anglers who love to fish our waterways as well as enjoying some tropical fishing during their winter vacations. Out on the middle of Lake Winnipeg's south basin this last weekend, I met such a young couple. It was an overcast, warm Saturday afternoon as I rambled along over the endless ice pack until I came upon a large por-

table shack with a lanky, young chap in his T-shirt working a fish line in an ice hole outside the tent. I stopped beside him and, leaving my truck, asked him if he had caught anything.

"No," was his singular response.

Just then, a young, thin, brown-haired lady came out of the tent. Seeing my writer's sign on the side of Old Red, said, "Why don't you come inside?"

Standing in the roomy shelter, with the hum of a gas heater, I noticed that warmth had melted the surface of the ice floor, making it as clear as glass. One could see the walls of the ice holes reaching down to the water below. Odd!

The young lady seemed more talkative as we got to know each other and said they were Chris and Jacquie Loeppky from Chartrand. Chris then became quite animated when Jacquie began telling of their last winter trip to Los Cabos, Mexico, and Chris's battle with a swordfish. They had gone on a guided fishing excursion and Chris was set up in a deep sea fishing chair as the guide baited his hook and tossed it overboard. His heavy line fell away from the back of the boat and seemingly instantly a large "sailfish" struck the bait. The sleek fish's blue back broke the choppy waves then dove deep.

Chris began describing how it swam from one side of the big boat they



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED
Chris Loeppky with his catch of a Mahi Mahi off Los Cabos, Mexico.

were in to the other while staying deep. Suddenly the line tightened and the blue-silver beast flew high out of the water, carrying Chris's line cutting the waves in a long hanging arc. This trip and this deep sea fishing opportunity had been a long time in the planning and Chris was determined to take his time and revel in his experience. When the fish swam closer to the boat, he reeled in when it stood on its tail and water walked away he let out line. The fight in the warm gusting wind and brilliant sun invigorated him and he worked the fish. After an hour of struggle, Chris had it long-side the boat, its white belly and iridescent blue-black head slapping the water. Then, inexplicably, it slipped the hook and was gone! Standing beside Chris in his tent, I could feel his intensity and his faraway look as he relived his fight with the swordfish!

Until next week. Bye for now.

Grey Cup coming to Gimli Tuesday, February 11

By Patricia Barrett

The Winnipeg Blue Bombers' six-week Grey Cup Manitoba Tour includes a pit stop in Gimli next week.

Along with mascots Buzz and Boomer, the trophy will make an appearance on Tuesday, Feb. 11.

The football club won the Grey Cup last November, its first win in 29 years, and the team pledged to share that victory with rural Manitoba communities. Gimli and Selkirk (visited Jan. 19) are the only two Interlake towns included on the tour. The cup has already travelled to Kenora, Ont.

There will be a Bomber flag-raising at the municipal office to kick things off, and tour organizers have scheduled both public and private events

in Gimli, according to Gimli Chamber of Commerce co-president Cheryl Buhler.

People with season tickets and chamber members are invited to a private event at the Lakeview Gimli Resort from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

A free public event will follow from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. It will include opportunities for people to take a photo with the cup and see a screening of the Nov. 24, 2019, Grey Cup game.

There may be other events planned for earlier in the day, but the full schedule wasn't available by press time.

Please visit the Explore Gimli website at www.exploregrimli.com closer to the day for more details.



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Sobeys officially eliminating all single-use plastic grocery bags

Staff

If you're planning on shopping for groceries at Sobeys, you will have to remember to bring your reusable bag with you.

As of last Friday, Sobeys removed all of its plastic grocery bags at all of its 255 locations across Canada, including in Gimli.

This makes the grocery retailer the first national Canadian grocery chain to ban single-use plastic bags.

Sobeys is encouraging shoppers to remember to bring their reusable bags each and every time they grocery shop. If you forget, Sobeys is selling large reusable grocery bags for 99 cents, smaller reusable bags for 25 cents, and paper bags are available for 10 cents, with a portion of paper bag sales going to plant trees in Canada.

Sobeys is also encouraging Canadians to join the OurPart™ pledge, confirming their commitment to bringing a reusable grocery bag each

time they shop. To take part, visit OurPart™ or share #OurPart on social. According to the federal government, 15 billion plastic bags are used in Canada every year.

Eliminating single-use plastic grocery bags, and promoting reusable options, is an important step in Sobeys' sustainability journey. Here's why:

- 225 million plastic grocery bags — that's the number of single-use plastic bags that will be removed from circulation at all 255 Sobeys stores each year.

That's enough to wrap around the world twice!

- The amount of petroleum it takes to drive a car 1.6 kilometres is the same amount of petroleum needed to produce 14 plastic bags.

- According to the Canadian government, 15 billion plastic bags are used in Canada every year.

- The average plastic bag is used for



EXPRESS PHOTO BY LANA MEIER

Sobey's employees, left to right, Mary Bigger, Wendy Anderson and Linda Krochenski, show off the assortment of reusable bags available for purchase at the Gimli store.

just 12 minutes and it takes over 500 years to decompose in landfill.

- In 2019, the Canadian government announced plans to "ban harmful single-use plastics as early as 2021 in

an effort to reduce the three million tons of plastic waste tossed out by the country every year".

> BENEFITS, FROM PG. 5

lars to spend. With a single administration, more checkoff dollars will be allocated towards funding research," says Misko.

He clarifies that "amalgamation is not going to reduce the check-off amount; it's going to make the checkoff more efficient. It will allow for more research to be done on the smaller crops without costing any more money."

Maximize research dollars

Penner feels collaboration is critical, stating, "the only way these organizations are going to survive in the future is if they build strength from each other and organize their management and finances. They need to focus on what the dollars given to them were specifically supposed to do, such as crop research for grower benefit."

Investment into research and market development will be a priority and significant focus of Manitoba Crop Alliance.

"Large-scale research projects in conjunction with other commodities and other crop types are going to be one area that's really beneficial," says Krahn, although he does admit to being hesitant about the amalgamation proposal at first from a corn producer's perspective.

"Dollars spent in the corn industry are huge in Manitoba, but acreage is small. Initially, I was quite hesitant thinking that we'd lose our identity or attention on the current crop. But when I started having consultations and conversations with other groups,

I soon realized we could benefit from being a larger organization representing multiple crops."

Misko agrees. "Smaller crops will not disappear. It's built into the structure of the potential new organization that every crop will have their own committee, ensuring that research, projects and the needs for each crop are addressed and considered," he says.

Whole-farm approach

"We need to look at research on a

whole-farm level," says Misko. "In general, farmers grow more than one crop. We can't only look at agronomic benefits of any individual crop and what's going to benefit it alone. Some research really hinges on rotational issues; disease, insects or just agronomics. What benefits one crop, will usually benefit all. It's a lot simpler to be doing research as a group than trying to negotiate with five different groups."

Krahn is optimistic about the out-

come.

"I'm really hopeful the amalgamation will go through due to the countless benefits it offers Manitoba farmers. My feeling is that we will soon be one organization and it's going to be a very positive thing. I hope all producers come out to their respective AGMs and have their voices be heard."





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Gimli Hospital receives WCF 's Dr. Elaine Sigurdson Memorial Scholarship Fund donation

Submitted by IERHA

The Gimli Community Health Centre has received a grant from the Dr. Elaine Sigurdson Memorial Scholarship Fund for the purchase of a tilt wheelchair for the acute care program.

When individuals are unable to weight shift independently, or change positions while seated upright, they are at high risk for pressure injuries. This chair eliminates those risks to patients.

In 2016 Barrie and Ardith Sigurdson, along with Barrie's parents Alma and Raymond, established a fund in memory of Dr. Elaine Sigurdson with the Westshore Community Foundation. Subsequent to that, other family members and friends have also generously contributed to the fund. The purpose of the fund is to provide an annual scholarship to a former student from the Evergreen School Division who has been accepted into the Faculty of Medicine or the Physician Assistant Program at University of Manitoba in order to help encourage them to return to their rural roots upon graduation.

Elaine studied at the University of Manitoba and completed her internship and residency requirements in Regina and Ontario. Soon after meet-

ing all of the requirements to be a doctor, she moved to Denmark with her husband Otto Larsen. By that time, she had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Unfortunately, Elaine passed away at the young age of 59, and her life remains an inspiration to her family and many friends.

This year, since there is no one eligible for the scholarship, the fund is being used to purchase a tilt wheelchair for the Gimli Health Centre.

Tim Arnason, president of the Westshore Community Foundation, says "Westshore Community Foundation was delighted when the Sigurdson Family chose to place the Dr. Elaine Sigurdson Memorial Scholarship with them. The overall purpose of this scholarship falls well within our mandate of building a lasting legacy within our catchment area and the specific health-care focus is on point with one of our main areas of support."

Pamela McCallum, executive director of the Interlake Eastern Health Foundation, highlights how working with local foundation's benefits the communities we live and work in.

"We are so grateful for the support from the Westshore Community Foundation and the Dr. Elaine Sigurdson Memorial Scholarship Fund. When community groups work to-



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED
Left to right: Raymond Sigurdson, Leanne Nickel-Brown (Gimli CTM), Alma Sigurdson, Barrie Sigurdson, Ardith Sigurdson, Tim Arnason (president of the Westshore Community Foundation) and Tristin Tergesen (past president of the Westshore Community Foundation).

gether for the betterment of health, everyone wins and we look forward to working with them on future projects."

Interlake Eastern Foundation's mission is to raise funds that support

health care in the Interlake-Eastern health region. For more information, visit www.iehf.ca or contact Pamela McCallum, executive director at 204-785-7044.

> CLEANEST FUEL, FROM PG. 6

premier is calling on the federal government for a fresh evaluation of the province's Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan to cap the carbon tax on Manitobans.

"Manitobans deserve respect for our green agenda, our historic and sig-

nificant investments in clean, green renewable energy," said Pallister. "Our plan puts a price on carbon that is low and level, like the Prairies, and keeps more money in the pockets of Manitobans while getting the same amount of emissions reductions as the rising

federal carbon tax. Our Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan is better for the economy, better for the environment and better for Manitoban families."

Tuesday's announcement builds on the government's climate change and green initiatives to make Manitoba the cleanest, greenest and most climate resilient province in Canada, through its Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan. This includes:

- investing billions of dollars invested in clean, renewable hydroelectric energy;

- eliminating, once and for all, the use of coal for electricity generation;
- providing over \$200 million for the GROW and Conservation Trust programs to sustain investments in cleaner air, water and soil management;
- creating watershed management strategies;
- establishing Efficiency Manitoba demand-side management;
- introducing fuel-efficiency measures for the trucking industry; and
- working with the private sector to eliminate the use of plastic bags.

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Armstrong council to decide on selling land to new Hutterite colony

By Patricia Barrett

The RM of Armstrong council has yet to decide whether it will sell municipally owned land to a Hutterite colony and allow it to establish a new colony on its border with the RM of Gimli.

Council discussed the matter at its regular meeting Jan. 14 after receiving requests from the Crystal Spring Hutterite Colony.

Edward Kleinsasser of Crystal Spring asked to purchase two sections of RM-owned land at NE 29-18-3E and NW 29-18-3E, which run along Road 107N (Willow Creek Road). In addition, the colony requested permission to establish a farming operation and to build a colony on Section 28-18-3E, which it already owns.

The colony-owned land is zoned agricultural, but where applicable the colony would have to "obtain any required development and building permits for the structures," states the meeting minutes. And for water and sewer, the colony "will have to consult with the environmental officer."

Crystal Spring Hutterite Colony was established in 1954 in St. Agathe, Man., which is about 40 kilometres west of Steinbach. Its daughter colonies are Concord (Stony Mountain) and Suncrest (Kleefeld). In the 1980s Crystal Spring established a hog equipment business under the leadership of Jonathan Kleinsasser and others, according to its website.

Wards 4 and 5 Armstrong councillors said they have received "lots of calls" from residents regarding the proposed new colony, according to the minutes.

The RM's chief administrative officer Corlie Larsen said by email that council hadn't yet approved the sale of the two RM-owned sections, which will have to be publicly advertised.

"If they [council] plan to tender, there will be a resolution to do and it would have to go through the tendering process as NE & NW of 29-18-3E is RM-owned property that the colony is requesting to purchase," said Larsen.

The colony, if it's the successful buyer, would not have to seek council's approval to establish an agricultural operation on those two sections as they're already zoned agricultural, said Larsen. And there would also be no requirement to hold a public hearing.

Larsen said as far as she knows, the colony is not planning to raise swine on the section it already owns.

"Section 28 next to Section 29 is property the colony already owns and where they plan to build. They are not planning on having any hogs or pigs there," said Larsen. "They are

still working on their plans so [we] will know more [in future]. It will be a long process."

Section 28 abuts the west side of the border (Road 15E) dividing Armstrong from the RM of Gimli, and is about four miles west of Highway 8. The two RM-owned sections are about five miles west of the highway.

The RM acquired the two sections in 2016, according to meeting minutes from that year. The sections had been administered by [provincial] Crown Lands but became "vacant." The municipality assumed from the province's Crown Lands Property Agency (now Real Estate Services Division) the administration of the sections.

In 2018 an individual inquired about purchasing the two sections, according to meeting minutes. In addition to Kleinsasser's request last month to purchase the sections, another individual expressed interest and appeared as a delegation, according to the Jan. 14 minutes.

Armstrong Reeve Susan Smerchanski said by email that the letter council received from the colony "came as a complete surprise" as it had not scheduled a delegation to present to council and discuss its future plans.

"Council has not received a lot of information regarding their intentions and plans for a colony or their farming, manufacturing operational plans and practices or many details," said Smerchanski. "We look forward to meeting their representatives, who will be attending our Feb. 11 regular council meeting as a delegation."

Council meetings are open to the public, said the reeve, and the colony delegation will be an opportunity to clarify information and allow the public to get a better understanding of



EXPRESS MANITOBA AGRICULTURE AGRIMAPS

The Crystal Spring Hutterite Colony wants to purchase the NE and NW sections of 29-18-3E in the RM of Armstrong, close to the RM of Gimli border.

and "learn more about the plans and proposals and discuss timelines and any relevant issues or concerns."

Smerchanski said it is her understanding that Crystal Spring has purchased farmland in the RM of Gimli, and as "adjoining municipalities and good neighbours" they may meet in the near future to discuss concerns and plans for moving forward.

Willow Creek, or tributaries of the creek, runs along and through the sections in question, carrying snowmelt and rainwater from fields and ditches east to Lake Winnipeg. The creek empties into the coastal wetland at Siglavik. Based on the province's Agrimap software, a topographical image of the two sections up for sale (sections 29) shows a wide diagonal swathe of marshy land running through them and what may be a pond or small lake, plus other natural potholes.

As for potential environmental impacts, such as increases in phosphorus and nitrogen running into the lake from agricultural operations,

Smerchanski said the RM adheres to the bylaws and policies of the Fisher-Armstrong Planning District, works collaboratively with ratepayers, neighbouring RMs and other levels of government.

"It's important to share information, ideas and best practices, discuss and work through issues and concerns to resolve problems, and to move forward in an amicable way to ensure compliance and a positive outcome," said Smerchanski. "As with any development plan, there is a lengthy and extensive process, including public input and federal, provincial and municipal legislation which includes regulations and compliance requirements."

RM of Gimli Mayor Lynn Greenberg said by email he had spoken with Reeve Smerchanski regarding the proposed new colony and is waiting for more information about the colony's plans.

Greenberg said the watershed, Lake

Continued on page 13

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Arborg Early Middle School getting a little brain exercise

By Patricia Barrett

The librarian at Arborg Early Middle School thinks there's no better way to start the day than with a little bit of "brain exercise" through reading.

And that's exactly what Iris Stansell had kindergarten to Grade 8 students doing Monday morning to kick off I Love to Read Month, an annual celebration of reading and literacy that schools and libraries across the country participate in every February.

AEMS students brought their favourite book from home and hunkered down in the hallways to get a mind-boosting jump-start on the school day.

"It's like exercise for the brain," said Stansell, who's an educational assistant and is also pulling double duty as librarian for the year. "Reading improves their concentration, helps broaden their imagination and creativity, and expands their vocabulary. It's an important skill they'll use for life."

One of the Evergreen School Division's main pillars of education is literacy, which will enable students to participate in a democratic society and prepare them for post-secondary education. Improving reading and writing skills is part and parcel of AEMS' everyday activities.

But to make reading even more fun than it is already, Stansell has a plethora of book-related activities lined up for the rest of the month. That includes bringing in guest readers, having students read with flashlights in a dark gym, having them dress up as their favourite book character and having

random "Stop, Drop and Read" periods in which an announcement will come over the intercom and students will have to stop what they're doing and grab a book.

She'll also be putting the regular reading buddies — older students who read to the younger ones over the course of the year — to good use to help entrench the habit of reading.

"We're also doing Reading Bingo. The students will have to read one book per day and fill in Bingo sheets," said Stansell. "Then they'll get a little prize. I've also got prizes to give away at the end of the month."

In the age of the Internet where kids can easily get distracted by what they find online, Stansell said the students still "love" getting their hands on a paper book.

"They're always asking for new books and it's nice to see them not wanting to be on devices," she said. "They actually want to do some reading and we want to keep it interesting for them by always bringing in new books and keeping up with new topics."

Stansell said literacy is a "team effort" at AEMS and she's gotten lots of support from principal Brad Harding, the teachers and other staff members to make the month a success.

"These activities for I Love to Read month will get the kids excited to read. They've got books they love and they get something fun at the end of it," said Stansell. "We really want to promote reading and make it fun."



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY IRIS STANSELL

Arborg Early Middle School students read their favourite book in the hallways to kick off I Love to Read on Feb. 3.

Arborg Arena in the running for 14th Annual Kraft Hockeyville

By Patricia Barrett

Arborg has submitted its bid to the Kraft Hockeyville contest for a chance to bring an NHL game to town and win \$250,000 in arena upgrades.

Tom Chwaliboga, recreation director for Arborg-Bifrost Parks and Recreation, said he's hoping the community will submit their hockey stories to the contest.

"Once a community arena is nominated, people can post and add different stories about the arena, about hockey in general and their community," he said. "It's a chance to gain some extra points and go into the next round of the contest."

Judges will be looking for inspiring stories showing how a community embraces hockey. A great story will earn rally points, which can also be earned by promoting the arena on Twitter and using photos or videos.

Sponsored by Kraft Heinz, the NHL and the NHL Players' Association, the contest was launched in 2006 and has awarded \$3.5 million in arena upgrades across 81 communities, according to Kraft



Hockeyville's website.

"Our existing dressing rooms are from the 1970s and that's something we'd be interested in upgrading if we won," said Chwaliboga. "We'd also like to re-work the beams that restrict viewing from the lobby to the ice surface."

Judging will take place from Feb. 10 to March 13 and the Top 4 communities will be announced on March 14. Voting will take place on March 27 and 28 with the winner announced on March 28.

"We hoping people will go ahead and post differ-



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Arborg has submitted a bid to the Kraft Hockeyville contest for a change to bring an NHL game to town and win \$250,000 in arena upgrades.

ent stories and pictures," said Chwaliboga.

For more information about the contest, visit krafthockeyville.ca.

Syphilis infections on the rise in the Interlake

By Patricia Barrett

Content Warning: The information in this article can be considered sensitive and is directed to an adult audience

The Interlake region continues to experience increased rates of syphilis infections in keeping with a “large” outbreak underway in the province.

The majority of syphilis infections are sexually transmitted, but the bacterial disease can also be acquired by people injecting drugs with unclean needles and be transmitted from a woman to her unborn child or during delivery (congenital syphilis).

“Manitoba is currently experiencing a large syphilis outbreak,” said Dr. Karen Robinson, medical officer of health for the IERHA. “People who are concerned they may have a sexually transmitted infection should see their local public health nurse or their primary care provider.”

The Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority saw syphilis cases increase in 2017 and 2018 among both men and women, among heterosexuals and among men who have sex with men.

In 2014 the IERHA had six cases. That jumped to 64 cases in 2018. Preliminary statistics (final data is not yet available) for 2019 show 56 cases, according to statistics the IERHA shared with the Express.

Unprotected sex, whether vaginal, oral or anal, and contaminated needles are putting people at risk of acquiring syphilis, which can be treated with antibiotics before it progresses to later stages that can cause serious health conditions.

“Anyone who does not use a barrier such as a condom or a dental dam during sex may be at risk of contracting the infection,” said IERHA communications associate Lita Savage-Murray.

Behaviours such as having multiple sexual partners and failing to practise safe injections with clean needles can increase the risk of contracting the disease, she said.

On its website, the health authority says increasing infection rates may be linked to the use of social media and social networking sites through which people can easily make arrangements to meet.

People are encouraged to take an active role before engaging in sexual activity, asking a potential partner questions about his/her sexual health status and practices, and checking for signs of infection. People should say no to sexual activity with someone who has symptoms of an infection.

Condoms may reduce the risk of infection but are not failsafe as skin-to-skin contact with active sores on other parts of the body can result in transmission of the bacterium.

If left untreated, syphilis can cause serious health complications such as blindness, paralysis and death in its later stages. Because the sores (also called chancres or lesions) are painless, people may not know they’re even infected. Sores can also go undetected in the mouth, vagina, anus or under the foreskin of the penis.

The bacterial disease has four stages. In the primary stage, symptoms such as enlarged lymph nodes in the groin and a small painless sore or several sores on the skin (typically at the location the bacteria entered the body) will appear 10 days to three months after exposure. The sores will heal on their own but the infection will persist, according to WebMD, a credible medical website that provides reference material and medical news.

Secondary stage symptoms in-

Continued on page 14



Syphilis bacteria

EXPRESS IMAGES COURTESY OF WEBMD
Syphilis sores can emerge anywhere on the body, not only on the genitals.

> SELLING LAND, FROM PG. 11

Winnipeg’s commercial fishery and tourists are important to his municipality.

“The RM of Gimli would want any large livestock operation to be required to follow strict provincial regulations to protect the Willow Creek watershed and Lake Winnipeg because of commercial fishing and tourism,” he said.

For more information about what time the colony delegation is scheduled to present on Feb. 11, call the RM of Armstrong municipal office in Inwood at 204-278-3377.

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Entrepreneurial enterprise opens bakery in Lundar

By Evan Matthews

A fresh idea is being baked up in Lundar.

Danny Walker, 29, started baking when he was a 14-year-old boy and has become well-known around the community for his abilities.

With the help of Pulford Community Living Services, Walker and other Lundar locals have started the Pulford Bakery to supply town residents with locally baked goods. The new entrepreneurial enterprise opened its doors last month.

"I like baking because I like to sell it to all my customers," said Walker. "I like to bake because I like to make things that I would also like to eat."

Pulford Community Living Services is a Winnipeg-based non-profit, with Interlake connections in Ashern and Lundar, according to its director of organizational development Andy Russo. Since 1986, the organization has provided support to adults living with intellectual disabilities.

The main goal, according to Russo, is empowering people to live their lives the way they so choose in their own home and to be part of their community.

"We want people to be able to live life. ... Learn from the consequences of their choices, no different than anyone else, and to be treated no differently," said Russo, adding Pulford supports roughly 150 people at present.

"Here, we are looking at a social enterprise. We're looking at two things: One, helping the people we support get very much involved with meaningful work, and two, looking to have the social enterprise financially sustain itself.

"If we're able to do both, then great," he said.

With other enterprises well underway — such as a secondhand store in St. Anne — Pulford began thinking about what enterprises could exist up



A finished product, as the cookies Pulford Bakery bakes are weighted to ensure consistent sizing.

Highway 6, in Lundar specifically, for the people it supports.

Walker is well known around town for his baking abilities, and Russo said the concept for the Pulford Bakery began with attempting to figure out a way to have Walker compensated financially for his skills.

"When you look at a social enterprise, it's really an opportunity to identify a social and economic issue at hand, and how to better those situations," said Russo.

"We support adults with intellectual disabilities, and often finding meaningful work for some of the people we support can be challenging. When you think about social enterprise, there has to be a cause and a need.

"What can we as an organization do to make that introduction, to show employers and community members that the people we support are very capable? They can do anything and everything you or I can do," he said, making noting that Pulford Bakery isn't just about baking but also resumé building.

Community involvement is a high



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY JEFF WARD

Danny Walker rolling out a loaf of bread.

priority to Pulford, too, and Russo said Lundar didn't have a bakery — meaning a "gap" existed in the community. All of a sudden, Russo said developing the concept for a local bakery, while having Walker and his colleagues compensated, became the project.

For now, the project will be on a one-year trial, according to Russo. The process involves collecting orders and payment for the first two weeks of every month, according to Russo, with the third week having the production day. During the fourth week of the month, Russo said the organization delivers orders.

The first month saw 23 orders come to fruition, according to Russo.

While there is no storefront, Pulford has an agreement with the Lun-

dar Ag Society to rent its building for production days, according to Russo, while the bakery's staff produces the product from the pre-order forms and proceeds to deliver those orders.

"For now, it allows us to cut out the guesswork. What if we didn't have the product people actually wanted? How do we keep up with supply and demand when it can ebb and flow every single day? We thought, the best way to do it would be to have consumers tell us what they want us to bake, pay for it, we make it, and then deliver," said Russo.

"It allows us, too, to have complete control over our expenses."

To place orders or donate, call the Pulford Community Living Services office in Lundar at 204-762-5050.

> SYPHILIS, FROM PG. 13

clude a skin rash that causes reddish-brown sores on the body, sores in the mouth, vagina, penis or anus, fever, swollen glands, weight loss, hair loss, extreme fatigue and headache.

In the latent (hidden) stage, a person won't have any symptoms, perhaps for years, or the symptoms will never return. But the bacteria remain dormant and may progress to the tertiary stage.

The tertiary stage is the most severe, appearing 10 to 30 years after an initial infection. People can experience damage to organs such as the heart, brain,

liver, nerves and eyes, and experience neurological problems, strokes, deafness, blindness and dementia. It can also cause death.

Manitoba as a whole has seen an increase in the numbers of syphilis infections since 2013, according to provincial data on sexually transmitted and bloodborne infections. In 2015 a province-wide outbreak was declared. In 2017 infectious syphilis case counts were up more than 400 per cent compared to 2013. In June 2019 Manitoba Health notified health-care providers that syphilis case counts for

2018 were "the highest on record" and a "large outbreak" of syphilis continued in 2019.

With a resurgence in syphilis infections, the IERHA, like other RHAs, has been focusing on educating and informing health-care providers, said Savage-Murray. People who use drugs are offered STI and blood-borne infection testing because "some drugs are known to reduce inhibition and increase sexual activity, which puts people at greater risk." Testing will invariably result in finding more syphilis cases.

The IERHA's public health program

is also working with populations most at risk for contracting the disease, and all women receiving prenatal care are being tested for syphilis to prevent instances of congenital syphilis.

"Public health nurses have all been trained to draw blood for testing for sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections. They can also provide basic treatment for infections," said Savage-Murray. "In addition, public health nurses engage in case management and contact tracing. They are involved in outreach activities in collaboration with other agencies."

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Kerri Einarson captures Manitoba women's curling title

By Ty Dilello

In a wild and crazy provincial Scotties final in Rivers on Sunday night, it was Gimli's Kerri Einarson who stood at the top when the dust settled, overcoming St. Vital's Jennifer Jones 8-6 in a thrilling back-and-forth affair.

Einarson's rink, featuring third Val Sweeting, second Shannon Birchard and lead Briane Meilleur, will now head to the 2020 Scotties Tournament of Hearts in Moose Jaw, SK., which gets underway on Feb. 15.

The Scotties' final featured a lot of great shots and some costly misses that resulted in big steals. Leading 7-6 in the final end without the hammer, Einarson made a beautiful shot with her final stone to set up her team's victory.

With the Jones' rink lying four, Einarson's only chance was to draw through a whole pile of stones and get a piece of the button behind a wall of rocks. She made an absolutely perfect draw to the button that Jones was unable to remove with the last stone of the game, giving Einarson the win and the provincial championship.

"I knew I was gonna be close because I just threw it," said Einarson. "So I knew if I threw it a few feet less it would be absolutely perfect. Val called it well, the girls swept it well and it was great.

"I'm so proud of my teammates for sticking in that game. I struggled a little bit with the draw weight. It felt a little quicker than it was, but I knew I would come along and make a draw



Kerri Einarson

sometime and I made it when it really counted."

Einarson will be returning to the women's national championship for the third time and will be a frontrunner to win her first Scotties.

"It means so much," said Einarson. "I really wanted to do this for my teammates. We've been through a lot and Val's been through a lot in her curling career so we really wanted this one. We really buckled down and made the shots when they really counted."

It should be noted that there is a second chance available to reach the Scotties for the two other top Manitoba rinks. Jennifer Jones will now play off against East St. Paul's Tracy Fleury in the wildcard game the Friday night before the Scotties begin.

Fleury appeared to be the favourite



EXPRESS PHOTO BY CONNIE LALIBERTE

From left to right: skip Kerri Einarson, third Val Sweeting, second Shannon Birchard and lead Briane Meilleur pictured with the trophy after capturing the Manitoba Scotties women's curling championship in Rivers this past Sunday.

heading into last weekend after winning their first six games. They ended up stumbling to Einarson and then again to Jones in Sunday morning's semifinal to finish the event in third place.

Other Interlakers in the field included Marquette's Sara Oliver, who threw lead rocks for the Abby Ackland rink. Ackland was hot from the get-go, winning their first three games, including a victory in their opening

draw against Einarson.

But she stumbled in her final two games to finish 3-2 and out of the playoff round.

While East St. Paul's Kristy Watling was one of the great stories from the Scotties as the upstart young rink went 4-1 in the round robin to advance to the playoffs. They were ultimately eliminated on Saturday night after a pair of losses to Einarson (7-1) and Jones (8-5).

Bantam Lightning edged by Southwest Cougars

Staff

Interlake's Rylan Slatcher and Darian Sinclair scored in the Lightning's 3-2 loss to the Southwest Cougars in Bantam "AAA" boys' hockey action on Sunday in Warren.

Ashton Cuvelier, Josh Fluker, and Luke Mackenzie replied for Southwest.

Mackenzie's marker came at the 10:04 mark of the middle frame.

On Friday in Landmark, Merik Boles scored a pair of goals to spark the Eastman Selects to a 4-0 shutout win over the Lightning.

Luke Mistelbacher and Roan Coe (power play) scored Eastman's other

goals.

Last Thursday, Interlake was doubled 6-3 by the Winnipeg Hawks.

Sinclair and Slatcher scored power-play goals for the Lightning while Hayden Wheddon tallied an even-strength marker.

Andrew Hladun (two), Dawson Zeller (two), Lucas DeSousa and Lyam Friesen replied for the Hawks.

Interlake will host the Norman Wolves this Thursday (7:15 p.m.) in Warren, the Winnipeg Monarchs Saturday (5 p.m.) in Arborg, and the Pembina Valley Hawks on Sunday (2:30 p.m.) in Lunder.



EXPRESS PHOTO BY LANA MEIER

The Interlake's Darian Sinclair scored in the Lightning's 3-2 loss to the Southwest Cougars last Sunday.

sports&recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Riverton reaches consolation final of varsity boys' basketball tournament

Staff

The Riverton Patriots reached the consolation final of Warren Collegiate's varsity boys' basketball tournament on Saturday.

Riverton was defeated 57-33 by Teulon Collegiate.

The Patriots started the tournament with a 97-55 loss to Mac-

Gregor but then bounced back to beat St. Laurent 77-63.

MacGregor won the tournament with a 70-63 victory over the Hapnot Kopper Kings.

Riverton will take part of a four-team tournament involving themselves, Teulon, Fisher Branch and St. Laurent on Wednesday.

U18 female Lightning preparing for the playoffs

Staff

The playoffs are right around the corner for the Interlake Lightning U18 female hockey team.

Interlake will play two more games - both at home - this weekend before the playoffs.

The Lightning will host the Winnipeg Avros on Friday (8 p.m.) in War-

ren and then the Winnipeg Ice Saturday (7:30 p.m.) in Stonewall.

Last Saturday, Interlake was shut out 4-0 by the Pembina Valley Hawks in Morden.

Pembina Valley scored three times in the first period and then added another tally in the second.

Gimli places third at junior varsity boys' home basketball tournament

Staff

The Gimli Lakers placed third at their eight-team junior varsity boys' basketball tournament last Saturday.

Gimli defeated Helen Betty Osborne 69-68 in a thrilling third-place game.

The Lakers started the tournament with a 76-50 victory over the Arborg Collegiate Athletics but then lost 78-

45 to the Niverville Panthers.

Niverville won the tournament title after beating Calvin Christian 72-49 in the championship game.

In Arborg's other two games, the Athletics were defeated by Immanuel Christian (77-61) and Morris St. Jean Baptiste (66-53).

Tournament champs



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Fisher Branch Cougars won the junior varsity girls' basketball championship at a Riverton tournament on Jan. 25. Pictured, back row, left to right: Amanda Bouchard (coach), Taliya Vandersteen, Lexi Podiama, Danielle Lazorak and Olivia Mazur. Front row includes Heart Javier, Gracie Abas, Shelby Prus, Shayla White and Carolin Thomas.

Staff

The Fisher Branch Collegiate Cougars won the junior varsity girls' championship at a Riverton tournament on Jan. 25.

The Cougars, made up of eight Grade 9 and two Grade 10 students, defeated Riverton 56-13 in their first game before beating Ebb and Flow School 45-39 in the final.

"We were equally matched with them and both teams had a great game," said Cougars' coach Amanda Bouchard, adding that Fisher Branch was trailing at the halfway mark.

"But the girls knew that if they came out strong and gave it their all, they could do it. The girls have been working hard to strengthen their basketball skills throughout January."

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Falcons fly to three wins last week in CRJHL action

Staff

The Lundar Falcons played some great hockey last week and it resulted in three victories.

Lundar capped off an impressive week after shooting down the North Winnipeg Satelites 8-0 on Saturday.

The Falcons, which held period leads of 3-0 and 4-0, received two goals and an assist efforts from Bryce Allary and Josh Wilkinson while Braden Paulic had a goal and three helpers.

Mason Medeiros and Derek Benson recorded a goal and an assist apiece. Eric Miller scored the Falcons' other goal.

Ronald Jophnson chipped in with three assists in the game.

Three of Lundar's goals were scored while the team was shorthanded. The Falcons outshot the Satelites 61-27 as Chris Lesage earned the shutout.

Last Friday, Lundar defeated the St. Malo Warriors 3-2 in overtime.

Dennon Sichewski scored the game winner in OT.

St. Malo's Maxime Collette scored a first-period goal on the power play and then Lundar's Wilkinson tallied in the second.

Collette and the Falcons' Riley Wirgau traded goals 1:42 apart late in the third.

Dillon Rapinchuk made 33 saves for the win.

On Jan. 28, Lundar blitzed North



Mason Medeiros scored for the Falcons in their 6-1 win against North Winnipeg.

Winnipeg 6-1.

Paulic and Wilkinson led Lundar with a goal and three assists apiece while the Falcons' other goals were scored by Ryan Gleich, Derek Benson, Shayne Desjarlais and Medeiros.

Lundar scored twice on the power play while North Winnipeg's goal was scored by Eli Caparros while the Satelites had the man advantage.

Lundar outshot North Winnipeg 30-17 as Lesage earned the victory.



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY LANA MEIER

Falcons' goaltender Chris Lesage earned the victory on Jan. 28.

The Falcons, now in third place with 40 points, will host the Warriors on Friday at 8 p.m.

The Arborg Ice Dawgs, meanwhile, lost 6-0 to the first-place Selkirk Fishermen last Friday.

Chad King scored a first-period goal and then Travis Spratt, with a pair, Dane Derewianchuk and Jordan Simko tallied in the second to give the Fishermen a 5-0 lead.

Dane Derewianchuk then closed out

the scoring in the third. He had three points in the game along with Spratt and Evan Bedard.

Owen Derewianchuk made 29 saves for the shutout as Selkirk outshot Arborg 55-29

Arborg, in fourth place with 25 points, will visit Selkirk on Friday (7 p.m.) and then will host North Winnipeg on Sunday (5 p.m.) in Gimli.

U18 Lightning zapped by pair of Winnipeg teams

By Brian Bowman

The Interlake Lightning U18 boys' hockey team's losing ways continued last weekend.

Interlake was swept by a pair of Winnipeg teams and has now won just twice in its past 14 games.

Sunday saw the Lightning lose 9-2 to the Winnipeg Thrashers at Gateway Arena.

Austin Adair and Aiden Bruce scored power-play goals for the Lightning.

Nate Goodbrandson (two), Lucas Brenton, Matthieu Moreira, Carson Hinkel-Lysak, Brandon Ambrozik, Jordan Hughesman, Branden Huminek, and Jared Chapel tallied for the Thrashers.

On Friday, Interlake was defeated 6-2 by the Winnipeg Wild in Teulon.

Winnipeg's Tyson Smith scored a first-period goal and then Carter Halamandaris made it 2-0 before Interlake's Lyle Murdock scored at 12:36 of the middle frame.

But the Wild broke the game open with second-period goals from Hala-



Interlake's Lyle Murdock scored at 12:36 of the middle frame against the Wild last Friday.

mandaris, Hugie Hooker, and Logan Belton.

Two of those goals were scored on the power play.



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY LANA MEIER

Matt Vandel and Ayden Manningway celebrate Murdock's goal.

Winnipeg's Sam Court put the Wild up 6-1 but the Lightning's Kaydyn McMahon tallied late in the third.

Interlake, now 10 points back of the Central Plains Capitals for the final

playoff spot, will host the Yellowhead Chiefs on Friday in Arborg (7:30 p.m.) and then will play the Eastman Selects Sunday (2 p.m.) at the Sun Gro Centre in Beausejour.

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TOWN OF WINNIPEG BEACH CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



FINANCE COORDINATOR TOWN OF WINNIPEG BEACH

The Town of Winnipeg Beach located 45 minutes north of Winnipeg on the shores of Lake Winnipeg invites written applications for the position of Finance Coordinator.

The successful candidate will be responsible for all day to day financial transactions for the Town. This includes, but is not limited to Accounts Payable, Payroll, benefits administration, cash receipts and preparation of monthly Financial Statements.

Other duties will include providing assistance to the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town.

Experience within a municipal office setting is preferred, however, any candidate having strong accounting skills will be considered. Experience with Asyst accounting software will be considered an asset. Must have knowledge of government operations, statutes and by-laws. Enrollment in or completion of the Certificate Program for Municipal Administration will be considered an asset.

The Town of Winnipeg Beach provides an attractive benefits package; including Health, Dental & Vision, Pension Plan, Long Term Disability, Life Insurance and AD&D.

Qualified applicants are invited to submit a detailed resume marked "Finance Coordinator" to the undersigned by the end of business day; Friday, February 21, 2020. Please list previous experience and salary expectations, providing at least 3 references and copies of applicable certificates/diplomas along with a current Criminal Background Check.

Only those selected for an interview will be contacted. Please submit resume to:
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Town of Winnipeg Beach
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TOWN OF WINNIPEG BEACH

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



PUBLIC WORKS FOREMAN TOWN OF WINNIPEG BEACH

The Town of Winnipeg Beach, located 45 minutes north of Winnipeg on the shores of Lake Winnipeg invites written applications for the position of Public Works Foreman. This is a working foreman position.

We are seeking an individual who is self-motivated, with strong management skills, proactive with related public works experience, demonstrated leadership skills, supervisory, public relations and administrative skills. Reporting to the CAO, major responsibilities include managing and overseeing the daily operations of the Public Works Department in the areas of Roads, Building & Property, Capital Projects and Equipment Management. Minimum 2 years' experience required. The ideal applicant will have:

- Experience supervising staff, scheduling work and budgeting
- A valid Province of Manitoba driver's license-class 3 with air endorsement
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The Town of Winnipeg Beach provides an attractive benefits package; including Health, Dental & Vision, Pension Plan, Long Term Disability, Life Insurance and AD&D.

Qualified applicants are invited to submit a detailed resume marked "Public Works Foreman" to the undersigned by the end of business day; Friday, February 21, 2020. Please list previous experience and salary expectations, providing at least 3 references and copies of applicable certificates/diplomas along with a current Criminal Background Check and Drivers Abstract.

Only those selected for an interview will be contacted. Please submit resume to:

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In the matter of the Estate of Anna Imlah, late of Fisher Branch, Manitoba, Deceased. All claims against the above estate, supported by Statutory Declaration must be sent to the attention of Wayne Imlah, P.O. Box 577, Fisher Branch, Manitoba on or before the 19th day of March, 2020. Dated at Fisher Branch, Manitoba this 6th day of February, 2020
Wayne Imlah
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Fisher Branch, MB
R0C 0Z0
Executor

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OBITUARY



Walter Chwartacki

Walter Chwartacki passed away peacefully at Gimli Hospital with family by his side on Thursday, January 30, 2020 at the age of 66. He now joins his granddaughter Nicolina (AKA Papa's Boss).

Walter was born on December 20, 1953 in Gimli, Manitoba. Walter will be deeply missed by his wife of 40 years, Eleanor; son Warren; daughter Pamela (Rick); grandchildren Kaylee, Marcus and Matteo; mother Zennith Chwartacki; sisters Diana; Beverly; Evie (Tom); Gail (Ben); and Eileen; as well as numerous aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, great nieces, great nephews, cousins and in-laws. Walter is predeceased by his father Walter, children Walter and Priscilla.

Walter's passions included driving on the winter roads as soon as they could open, working on his many Ford Taurus' and spending time with his grandchildren taking them on many road trips. He

worked many jobs including the Manitoba Highways department for 25 years until he retired. Walter was a hard-working individual who always gave a helping hand whenever needed by family and friends spending time with them as well.

Funeral will be held at Gilbert's Funeral Home in Gimli on Friday, February 7, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Cancer Care Manitoba.

Condolences may be left on his tribute wall at www.gilbertfuneralhome.com.

Gilbert Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.



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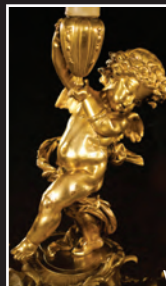
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