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EXPRESS PHOTO BY TYLER SEARLE

Brooke Erickson is recovering after a motorcycle accident in Vancouver last September. Her mom, Chrissie Erickson, spent seven months at her bedside.

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St. Laurent municipality declares a state of agricultural disaster

By Sydney Lockhart

With no rain and an increase in grasshoppers, many farmers struggle to have their land and animals survive this year.

"I've farmed the land all my life. My son is actually taking over wanting to be a farmer today," said 63-year-old Tom Johnson, a beef producer in the RM of St. Laurent. "He will be the fourth generation, so it's not like we just started no. We've been doing this for quite a while and the drought has kind of been putting a hamper to all of our efforts."

Johnson said he has never seen his land so dry in his life, and that for the first time ever, his dugouts are bone dry, leaving his cattle with nothing to drink, and little grass to feed on.

"Never. I have never seen it this dry in my life and everybody out here is saying the same thing," he said.

With next to no grass left for animals to graze, the next option would usually be hay, but even that is in short supply, and what little is available costs much more than usual because of the shortage.

"What little bit there is to eat, grasshoppers have eaten before we can get to it. We need rain real, real bad real fast, and a lot, not just a little bit," he said.

Johnson said even inches of rain would disappear so fast in the area that it wouldn't help at all.

Tom Johnson dug and built two wells in his pasture to provide water to his cattle.

EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Johnson may have to sell his cattle off if rain does not come, as his fields are not growing enough vegetation for them to graze on and hay is too expensive.

The consequences of this could mean many producers going out of business, having to sell off their cattle and supplies to get food on the table.

"It's not just a little local thing it's a big widespread area that's affecting a lot of us," he said.

The declaration of a state of agricultural disaster is a call for help to the provincial and federal government for financial help to keep the farms running.

"It would mean a difference of having to sell the cows off and get a little bit of financial help to buy all that stuff and keep going, whereas without it, everybody goes out," he said.

Johnson received some grant money from his local conservation district to help dig two solar powered wells that will provide water for his cows, but even with a bit of drinking water, he is still struggling to be able to feed his cattle.

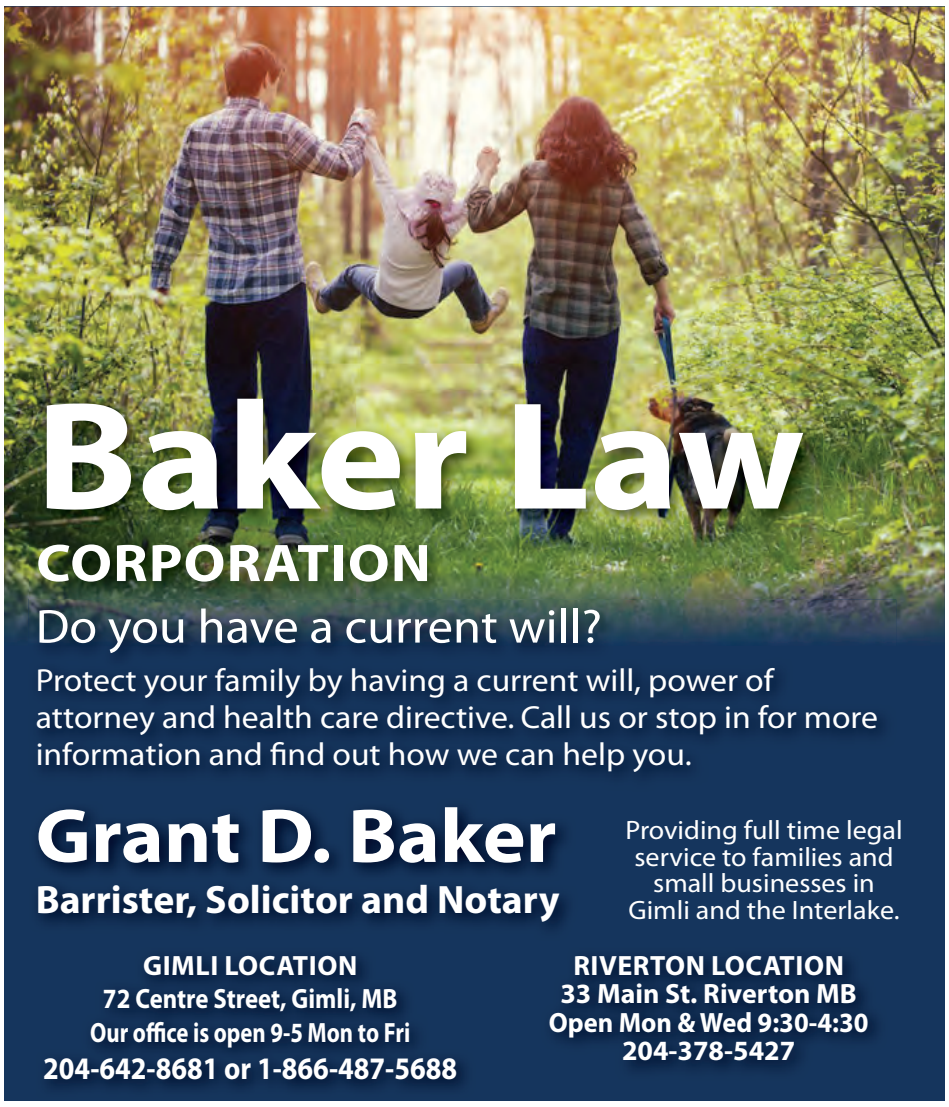
"That's how we make our living, but it also affects the consumers if anybody that wants to have hamburgers on the barbecue, steak for their barbecue might end up paying more. If we all go out and they've got to start importing all this stuff, meat doesn't come from the store, it's got to come from somewhere else to get to the store," he said.

Johnson said he feels disheartened by the situation as he has dedicated his life to his land and doesn't see relief from the drought in sight unless they get some extreme rainfall.

"Farmers are the biggest gamblers, and we always say, 'Well, next year it'll be better. You know we'll struggle through and try to get through, but this year is just ridiculous," he said, "we're just praying for rain right now. Everybody's in the same boat."

The RM of Coldwell and Armstrong also declared State of Agriculural Diasters last week.

West Interlake and Woodlands municipalities both have it on their agendas this week.



Lundar woman overcame tragedy with the help of friends, family and community

By Tyler Searle

Brooke Erickson, 29, cannot remember the moment that changed her life forever.

On Sept. 1, 2020, Erickson was the passenger in a motorcycle accident that left her with 19 broken bones—including both legs, arms, and wrists—a collapsed lung, spinal fractures, a traumatic brain injury, and a brachial plexus injury that paralyzed her left arm.

The motorcycle driver died in the accident.

Erickson remembers nothing of the driver nor how she ended up on his bike. She suspects she met him earlier in the day, during a live show on Vancouver's East Hastings Street.

The events preceding the crash are a patchwork account relayed by friends and witnesses who saw her that night.

At the intersection of East Hastings and Columbia streets, the bike collided with a bus.

The hardship she endured since the night of the accident is nearly too much to list.

Doctors spent eight hours performing reparative surgery on Erickson's body. They bolted metal plates to her arms, wrists, and collar bone and inserted a metal rod in her right leg from hip to knee. Proceeding surgeries addressed damage to her cheek and orbital bones.

Brooke Erickson is recovering after a motorcycle accident in Vancouver last September.

EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Erickson called this machine her "jolly jumper." It helped her regain the ability to stand and walk.

On her first day in Vancouver General Hospital (VGH), Erickson tested positive for COVID-19.

VGH staff relegated her to an isolation room, where they intubated her and placed her in a medically induced coma. She developed breathing complications, pneumonia, and blood clots.

On Sept. 23, doctors performed a tracheotomy, cutting a hole through the front of her neck into her windpipe to keep her on a ventilator.

For more than a month, she was unconscious—kept alive by the ventilator and feeding tube.

Erickson's mother, Chrissie Erickson, could only watch her daughter recover behind the glass window of the isolation room.

It was 33 days before Brooke Erickson tested negative for COVID-19, and Chrissie could hold her hand.

On day 43, doctors brought Erickson out of her coma and weaned her off the ventilator.

The end of the coma signified the first step in a lengthy recovery.

Erickson spent 70 days at VGA before moving to G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre (GFS) on Nov. 9.

The brain injury she'd sustained in the crash left Erickson largely incapacitated.

When doctors transferred her to the rehab centre, she could only lift her right hand off the bed.

"It's not necessarily that you can't do the things, your brain just forgets how to tell your body to do it," Erickson said.

She spent months working with the physio and occupational therapists at GFS to re-learn how to breathe, swallow, speak, sit up, stand, and walk.

It was Dec. 12—102 days after the accident—before she was able to take

Continued on page 4

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Ashern community helps out a stranded camper

By Nicole Brownlee

Mandy Bell set up her camp at Watchorn Provincial Park on June 25, much like she has set up camp for the past two decades.

The tent's pegs were secured in the grassy ground. Bell's food was safely tucked away in a blue Tupperware bin with a red lid. And all of her belongings were in their rightful place.

She forgot her trusty dish bin, and her air mattress refused to stay inflated, but Bell brushed off the inconveniences and tried to enjoy her weekend away from her home in Winnipeg.

Bell spent the next two days hiking, stopping at the beach and enjoying the beautiful weather.

On June 27, she had to relocate her gear after a campground scheduling mix-up, but she still secured the tent pegs, tucked away her food and organized her belongings.

Not long after moving, a sudden onslaught of wind snapped through her 14-year-old tent's exterior, blew her belongings across the camp and rendered Bell homeless for the night.

"It was just a little fluke," said Bell. "And the storm never came. The sun came back out, and I was sitting there looking at my broken tent like, seriously?"

But instead of packing it in and heading home for a disappointing end to her weekend, Bell decided to explore.

After a quick Google search, Bell found the Interlake Motel, just 20 minutes away from her scrambled campsite. She then found the What's Happening Ashern? Facebook page and posted a quick message shouting out the town for its accommodations.

"Currently stranded in your town," posted Bell. "Loving it though. Just an FYI."

Her message was met with several comments asking if she needed help or directions.

"Everybody was just so nice messaging me," said Bell. "They're like, 'Are you OK? Do you need anything?'"

Bell had driven through, by or near Ashern countless times since she used to live in Thompson but had never considered checking out the town.

"I never would have stayed in Ashern, you know. In any other condition I would have drove through to go to my campsite," said Bell. "It was kind of neat because I actually really enjoyed it."

EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Mandy Bell was camping in Watchorn Provincial Park on June 25, enjoying her stay until a sudden wind storm disrupted her peaceful weekend. The sudden storm ripped through Bell's 14-year-old tent, leaving her without a place to stay.

After enjoying her first sit-in meal since the COVID-19 pandemic hit at the Ashern Petro-Canada restaurant, Bell settled into her clean white room with a view of the community.

"It all sorted out, and then it just turned into this really nice evening of sitting on the deck of the Interlake Motel having a glass of wine and loving life," said Bell.

Bell has three more campsites reserved for the summer, but she hopes to revisit Ashern with her boyfriend in August.

> TRAGEDY, FROM PG. 3

her first bite of solid food.

She underwent a nerve graft surgery in January to relieve the paralysis of her left arm, but it was unsuccessful. There is potential for more surgeries in the future, but doctors cannot say what to expect, Erickson said.

"They said the nerves that should've been up in my neck were pushed down into my chest, and there just wasn't enough to reach to do a graft," she said.

"Right now, they are not saying there is nothing they can do, but they also aren't saying 'you're going to get your arm back,' and they were saying that before."

Throughout it all, her mother never left her side.

Chrissie's experience as a personal care assistant (PCA) at the personal care home in Lundar prepared her to help with the recovery.

She advocated for the best surgeries and treatments, interpreted medical terminology, and provided personal care for her daughter—often helping to dress and prepare her for the day's physiotherapy.

"Once I was there with her, I didn't want to come home until I could bring her home," Chrissie said.

GFS is the largest rehabilitation hospital in B.C. and specializes in brain and spinal cord injuries. The facility features teams of dedicated therapists and programs like music, art, and aquatic therapy.

The staff and fellow patients became like family to Erickson, and she made them a promise that was invaluable to her recovery.

"We had this deal, 'You're never saying 'no,'" Chrissie said.

"That was our deal. No matter what. We were there to take advantage, and she did."

Through therapy, Erickson regained her independence. She went grocery shopping, cooked meals, and returned to the ocean to dip her toes in the water.

On Jan. 18, 157 days after the accident, Erickson walked out of GFS.

For the next six weeks, she attended the rehab's day program, returning to GFS during the day and spending nights at home in her apartment.

"It was really good because it got me used to doing stuff at home, and not having nurses there," Erickson said.

Erickson completed the program on March 19 and flew home to Lundar with her mother.

The motorcycle driver who died in the crash did not have insurance on his bike, so there was no restitution.

Shortly after the accident, Erickson's friend Jocelyn Kuhn established a GoFundMe in support of her recovery.

If subsequent surgeries cannot repair the nerve damage to Erickson's brachial plexus, her left arm could remain paralyzed. Typically, insurance would cover any specialized equipment or therapy outside the medical system, but without coverage, the onus is on her.

To date, the fundraiser has raised $16,515 of its $40,000 goal. That does not account for cash given directly to the family.

The expense of having Chrissie live in Vancouver for seven months would have come out of pocket were it not for the goodwill of others.

People have stopped Erickson's father, Lorne, in the streets to hand him envelopes of cash, and the family has received donations from strangers.

These donations allowed Chrissie to stay by Erickson's side in the hospital, put food in their mouths, and paid the rent of her Vancouver apartment—ensuring she could return home after the hospital.

Erickson also received $5,000 in support of her recovery, courtesy of the staff at GFS who nominated her for the Gert Vorsteher Memorial Award.

"Ms. Erickson is extremely determined, hard-working, and has not let this accident diminish her lovely personality. Her perseverance despite all the challenges she has faced is a testament to her commitment to her rehabilitation and made it an absolute pleasure to work with her," wrote GFS Physiotherapist Gillian Hogg in a letter of nomination.

Other support came in the form of messages and testimonials that flooded the inboxes of Erickson's social media profiles.

The likes, comments, and encouragement she received online motivated her to push forward, even on her worst days and people have shown her overwhelming compassion, she said.

On July 11, Erickson returned to Vancouver to begin outpatient and vocational rehab programs at GFS. Chrissie will stay with her for 12 days to help her settle in and then fly back to Lundar.

The outpatient program will continue to facilitate her return to independent living, and vocational rehab will prepare her to find gainful employment despite her injury.

Nothing will stop Erickson from being herself. She faces every day with a fresh face of makeup and unstoppable determination, Chrissie said.

Life may look different moving forward, but Erickson will continue to treat others with kindness and smile in the face of adversity.

If there is an opportunity to have a laugh or go on an adventure, you can guarantee I will seize it, Erickson said.

"I want everyone from Lundar, and surrounding areas, and my friends to know how thankful I am because without them, this would have been such a different experience."

Erickson's GoFundMe page is still active and accepting donations at https://ca.gofundme.com/f/help-my-friend-recover-from-a-tragic-accident.

Study shows Pfizer COVID vaccine protection lasts up to almost 4 months

By Patricia Barrett

Whether or not COVID-19 vaccines can induce long-lasting immunity is a key research focus as the virus's more highly transmissible and deadly variants such as delta and delta plus ramp up in countries around the world.

An American study led by researchers at Washington University's School of Medicine in St. Louis, Mo., looked at the longevity of Pfizer-BioNTech's mRNA COVID vaccine. The findings suggest the vaccine can induce persistent immunity after the first dose of vaccine — up to 15 weeks in some people — and up to 12 weeks after the second dose.

The peer-reviewed study titled "SARS-CoV-2 mRNA vaccines induce persistent human germinal centre responses" in the journal *Nature* was published online June 28 as an accelerated article preview (not yet copy edited).

The study had 14 participants undergo a procedure (ultrasound-guided fine needle aspirate) to extract serum samples from their axillary (armpit) lymph nodes (the vaccine is injected into the deltoid muscle, which primarily drains to the lateral axillary lymph nodes). All participants were recruited from the St. Louis metropolitan area and had received two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Researchers focused on the response of germinal centre B cells, which are induced by mRNA vaccines.

B cells (also called B lymphocytes) are a class of white blood cells, which are part of the immune system. B cells make antibodies to destroy antigens, which are pathogens/foreign invaders such as viruses and bacteria. Germinal centres are anatomical structures found in human lymphoid organs such as the thymus, bone marrow, spleen, lymph nodes, tonsils and mucus membrane layers. B cells enter germinal centres to proliferate and diversify in response to an invader, much like a massing army, with its infantry, artillery and cavalry, on a 19th-century battlefield.

After the booster shot (dose two of Pfizer), researchers found that B cells increased "transiently" in all 14 participants and "persisted at high frequency" in most of them for at least seven weeks. At the 15-week mark, they found that the B cells of eight participants had remained "at or near their peak" and had high proportions of S-binding cells.

S refers to the SARS-CoV-2 [COVID-19] spike gene, to which B cells bind and secrete antibodies.

"In the draining LNs [lymph nodes], we detected robust SARS-CoV-2 S-binding GC [germinal centre] B cell and PB [antibody-secreting plasmablast] responses in aspirates from all 14 participants. These responses were detectable after the first immunization but greatly expanded after the booster injection," the researchers wrote. "Notably, S-binding GC B cells and PBs persisted for at least 15 weeks after the first immunization (12 weeks after secondary immunization) in 8 of the 10 participants sampled at that time point."

The researchers say this is the first study to provide direct evidence of a "persistent" antigen-specific B cell response after vaccination in human subjects.

The researchers don't note any limitations to their study, such as whether the serum samples collected from participants can be considered representative of the general population or how generalizations about the duration of other COVID mRNA vaccines, which were not part of their study, can be made.

However, they say the persistence of B cells and plasmablasts in draining lymph nodes is a "positive indicator" of a long-lived response. They added that future studies will be needed to determine whether mRNA vaccinations can induce an S-specific, long-lived response in bone marrow.

"Overall, our data demonstrate a remarkable capacity of SARS-CoV-2 mRNA-based vaccines to induce robust and prolonged GC [germinal centre] reactions," the researchers wrote.

Most now hospitalized with COVID-19 not vaccinated: Roussin

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Manitoba's top doc on Monday announced the lowest one-day jump in new COVID-19 cases in months.

At a briefing in Winnipeg that day, Dr. Brent Roussin announced 31 new cases of the virus, alongside 150 cases that were identified on Saturday (87 cases) and Sunday (63).

Two new deaths were also reported alongside one from Sunday, bringing the number of deaths due to COVID-19 to 1,162.

As of Monday morning there were 1,025 active cases of the virus in Manitoba and 54,733 recoveries.

The current five-day COVID-19 test positivity rate was five per cent provincially and 4.1 per cent in Winnipeg.

A total of 138 Manitobans are currently hospitalized with COVID-19, including 30 in intensive care here and three at hospitals in Ontario.

Officials note that 74 per cent of the 412 COVID-19 hospital admissions between June 1 and 30 had no vaccine doses and 22 per cent had one dose but two weeks had not yet passed since that dose — the time needed for the vaccine to take full effect.

Furthermore, of the 90 patients admitted to ICU in June, 77 per cent had not yet received a dose of the vaccine and three per cent had just one dose.

"We don't bring this up to blame or to shame anyone ... for the reason of their illness," Roussin stressed. "We're here showing the power of vaccine. We see very few people being admitted to hospital, really, after a single dose but especially after two doses.

"As we see less and less Manitobans that are unvaccinated, we're going to expect to see that translate into less and less need for hospitalizations and ICU admission," he said, noting they will be reporting this data regularly moving forward. "You can see the incontrovertible evidence of the value of vaccines right here in Manitoba.

"We know some Manitobans are hesitant to get vaccinated," Roussin continued. "If you have questions, please contact your health-care provider. You trust them with a lot of discussion and information — trust them with this."

Breaking the numbers down further for Monday, Interlake-Eastern reported four new cases of the virus for a total active caseload of 227. There were 13 people in hospital in the region with the virus, including four in ICU. The death count for Interlake-Eastern is 47.

In the Interlake-Eastern region, Arborg/Riverton confirmed six active cases, Beausejour 11, Eriksdale/Ashern 38, Fisher River/Peguis 93, Gimli 0, Northern Remote five, Pinawa/Lac du Bonnet four, Powerview/Pine Falls 44, Selkirk five, Springfield 10, St. Clements three, St. Laurent one, Stonewall/Teulon four, Unknown two, Whiteshell one and Winnipeg Beach/St. Andrews 0.

RCMP looking for youth advisory council members

Staff

The Royal Canadian Mountain Police are looking for new members for its National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC).

Canadian residents ages 13 to 21 are invited to apply by Sept. 10, though those who get their applications in by July 30 will be a part of the first selection round and have a better chance of being selected.

NYAC members interact with participants from all over the country and discuss important issues they face in their respective communities. They share their thoughts about youth crime and victimization topics and help shape RCMP programs and initiatives. NYAC members can also receive reference letters and volunteer hours.

This commitment requires approximately two to four online hours per month, from October to June.

For more information or to request an application package, email RCMP.Youth-Jeunesse.GRC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca.

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mRNA vaccine labels to include warnings of rare heart inflammation

By Patricia Barrett

Health Canada advised it is updating COVID-19 vaccine labels to warn the public and health-care professionals about the possibility of serious side effects associated with different vaccine products.

The agency will require AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine (also called COVISHIELD) label and product monograph to include warnings about capillary leak syndrome (CLS), one case of which has been reported in Canada (as of June 11).

"Capillary leak syndrome is a very rare, serious condition that causes fluid leakage from small blood vessels (capillaries), resulting in limb swelling, low blood pressure, thickening of the blood and low levels of albumin (an important blood protein) in the blood," stated the health agency in a safety alert issued June 29.

It is also advising people with a history of CLS to not get vaccinated with AstraZeneca.

If they've received the vaccine, they should seek immediate medical attention if they experience symptoms of CLS, such as rapid swelling of the arms and legs and sudden weight gain, which can be accompanied by feeling faint.

"Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada have been monitoring this condition since it was raised as a potential safety concern by the European Medicines Agency in April 2021," states the alert. "Up to and including June 11, 2021, one case of capillary leak syndrome following vaccination with the AstraZeneca or COVISHIELD COVID-19 vaccine has been reported in Canada."

AstraZeneca's vaccine has already been linked to a condition called vaccine-induced thrombotic thrombocytopenia characterized by blood clots and low platelet levels. Fatalities have occurred in countries — including Canada — that approved the vaccine.

"The [AstraZeneca] label has also been updated with information about very rare events of blood clots associated with low levels of platelets following immunization," states the alert.

International regulators have been updating labels to include capillary leak syndrome as a potential side effect, states the alert. Of 78 million doses of AstraZeneca administered in the U.K. and Europe, six cases of CLS were reported as of May 27, 2021.

Health Canada said it will continue to monitor CLS and "take further action" if necessary.

The agency will also require Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna's COVID vaccine labels to include warnings about pericarditis, an inflammation of the tissue surrounding the heart, and myocarditis, inflammation of the

Continued on page 7

letters to the editor

Letters to the Editor:
letters@expressweeklynews.ca

Congratulations to Gimli graduates

Dear Editor

This letter is a salute to everyone who was involved in preparing the Grade 12, 2021 graduation ceremony. I can only imagine how much planning and work that took place, from the parking and seating for all who attended. The music that was played "Never Grow Up" as each graduate walked the red carpet to their seat was so beautiful and appropriate.

On the more personal part of the ceremony, the speaker gave each graduate positive and personal comments that was a very great touch. Although it was an unusual year for all students, the graduation was an outstanding send off for the graduates of Gimli High School 2021.

- Lynnette Sisterson, Gimli

Thank you to Gimli health-care workers

A note of gratitude to the Gimli emergency health-care workers. Thank you to everyone from the receiving nurse to the triage nurse, including the nurse who performed the injection, the nurse who did the heart test, Dr. Jonah Fulmer and to the staff member at the small desk during my recent visit. If I'm missing anyone, thank you so much for making me feel very well cared for and serving me so quickly. I can't say thank you enough. You all did a great job.

- Jacob Dueck, Arborg

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Dr. Reimer addresses concerns about COVID-19 vaccine development

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Manitoba's task force co-lead Dr. Joss Reimer took some time last week to address those Manitobans who have not yet chosen to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

"Today I want to talk to some of the people who still have questions, who may not be sure, and may not be confident in the decision to get the vaccine," the Winkler native began at a press conference in Winnipeg July 7.

"There are two top reasons that we hear most often, and they're somewhat interconnected: concerns about how quickly the vaccine was developed and concerns about how quickly it was approved for use."

Some people worry the speed at which this happened means corners were cut, making for potentially unsafe, untested vaccines.

Reimer stressed that is simply not the case.

She acknowledged that vaccines are often years in the making, but the COVID-19 vaccines are unique in that work was already underway on developing vaccinations against other coronaviruses long before the pandemic broke out.

"Fortunately, scientists and other experts around the world were not starting from scratch. While this coronavirus is new, it is not the only coronavirus we have dealt with," Reimer said, explaining that it took scientists a matter of weeks to map the COVID-19 genome after it was first discovered. "That told us what kind of vaccine we would need in order to stop the virus.

"The scale of international partnership and collaboration that was needed to develop a vaccine was unprecedented," she continued, noting multiple vaccines were created in countries all over the world by companies taking different approaches (the normally substantial financial risk to do so offset by government support). "That in and of itself is unique and gives the world a much larger pool of vaccine candidates. A larger pool means the odds were better that some of them would prove to be effective."

The groundwork for all these vaccines had already been laid by previous research, Reimer said, noting viral vector vaccines (AstraZeneca) have been used for decades while mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) are using a relatively newer technology but one that had been well tested long before COVID-19 showed up.

"In fact, human trials of cancer vaccines using the same mRNA technology have been taking place since 2011. And work is underway on a new rabies vaccine using this technology," she pointed out, adding Moderna had even developed an annual influenza mRNA vaccine a few years ago. "So we were able to take something that was already in development and adapt it to the COVID pandemic."

When it came to testing these vaccines, once again the unprecedented nature of this pandemic worked in our favour.

"The steps that are truly important, and the ones we care the most about, are the underlying science, the medical evaluation, the clinic trials where the vaccines were tested on animals and on people who agreed to participate," Reimer said. "Those all happened as they needed to, as they would for any vaccine. What changed was the pace."

It can normally take years to deal with all the red tape that comes with getting medical trials approved, securing funding, and finding test subjects.

But with the entire world motivated to find a solution to the pandemic, that timeline was able to be condensed significantly.

"For example, it was very easy for the studies to recruit participants," Reimer said. "Volunteers were very eager to take part all around the world.

"It was also much easier to study how well the vaccine protected against the virus because there was so much virus present around the world," she continued. "Normally, you have to wait quite awhile before a large number of your participants are exposed to a virus that you're studying ... this time, the exposures were happening to participants regularly, and so it did not take very long to get that information [about effectiveness]."

The vaccines that proved effective in trials then moved on to be approved for use by Health Canada.

"Again, for COVID-19, the same processes were followed as for any other vaccine," Reimer said, explaining all new medications and vaccines must complete three trial phases before approval. These phases include a variety of different sizes of test subject pools and test appropriate doses, potential side effects, and efficacy.

"The science didn't change," Reimer stressed, "but, again, the timeline for all of the administrative processes that support the science were condensed."

Health Canada normally asks companies to submit their data for phases one, two, and three at the same time for evaluation. Given the ongoing health crisis, the agency in this case expedited the process by evaluating each phase as it was completed.

"So while the same review occurred, it meant that less time was required at the end of the phase three trial in order to get approval, because phase one and two had already been reviewed," Reimer said, explaining Health Canada was able to do this by prioritizing the COVID-19 vaccines over everything else in the approval queue.

Even once approved for use, the vaccines continued to undergo evaluation in the same way all new vaccines do.

"Canada has one of the best vaccine monitoring systems in the world," Reimer said. "And we use the information that we gather and the information from countries from all over the world to guide our decisions."

That process is what led to the discovery of rare side effects like blood clotting with the AstraZeneca vaccine, for example, which impacted public health officials' recommendations on who should or should not receive that vaccine.

"I know it can be a challenge to wade through all of the information out there about vaccines, especially when you have questions, but I do want to correct the information and make sure people know that these vaccines were tested, they were approved, and they were shown to be safe and effective in the same way as other vaccines," Reimer said. "The science behind these vaccines is solid. It's built on technology that we know and that we understand."

The speed of their creation will perhaps be food for thought once the pandemic is behind us.

"Now that we've seen how the world can come together to solve a health crisis, the real question may be why other vaccines and other medical interventions take so long," Reimer observed.

If you've got questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, talk to your family doctor or head to protectmb.ca.

SCREENSHOT

Dr. Joss Reimer, co-lead of the province's vaccination task force,, took time last week to address a few concerns people hesitant to get the COVID-19 vaccines often ask about their development.

> MRNA, FROM PG. 6

heart muscle, it said in an alert issued June 30.

Both conditions have been reported in Canada and Internationally after receiving the mRNA vaccines, primarily after the second dose of the two-shot vaccines and in mostly in "young male adults and adolescents." The agency said a "small number" of cases have been reported in Canada.

People who develop chest pain, shortness of breath or experience feelings of a fast beating, fluttering or pounding heart within several days of being vaccinated are advised to seek medical attention immediately. Severe cases can lead to heart muscle damage.

According to Health Canada's weekly vaccine summary report, a total of 31,400,466 vaccine doses have been administered in Canada (as of June 18). Adverse events have been reported by 7,926 people (about 3 out of 10,000 people). Of those 7,926 reports, 6,207 were considered non-serious and 1,719 were considered serious.

CASA provides grain-rescue training for Interlake firefighters

By Patricia Barrett

Volunteer firefighters in the Interlake found out last month how dangerous it is to get stuck in grain and how to rescue victims after the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) took its grain-rescue training course on the road.

Twenty-five firefighters from four fire departments — Arborg-Bifrost, Riverton-Bifrost, Fisher and Fraserwood — took part in the two-day course, which consisted of theory and practice. It was hosted at the Arborg-Bifrost fire hall's training grounds.

Arborg-Bifrost fire chief Leroy Loewen said everyone, including himself, got to experience what it was like to be buried in grain.

"When you're buried up to the waistline, it's difficult, if not impossible, to get out. Some people might experience claustrophobia," said Loewen. "I've got a whole new level of respect for grain through this experience."

Most entrapment scenarios occur in grain bins, said Loewen, but they can also happen in grain trucks. The danger comes when the grain is moving (it's possible, but not advisable unless safety protocols are in place, to stand on top of an unmoving pile of grain). The large augurs used nowadays can suck a person into the grain in seconds and trap them.

"The greatest hazard is while the grain is being handled," said Loewen. "It has never happened in the Arborg area that I'm aware of, but we took the training so that we're prepared. I hope we never have to use it."

Grain-rescue kits generally consist of firm mats, panels, an augur and a cordless drill. The mats are placed atop the grain to distribute rescuers' weight so that it's not transferred to the victim. They also prevent rescuers from sinking too deeply into the grain. A series of long semi-circular panels, which snap together to form a tube, are placed around the victim and pushed as deeply as possible into the grain. A small augur, which is powered by a cordless drill, is then used to remove the grain from around the victim.

The grain has to removed because of the pressure it takes to extract people, said Loewen. Trying to pull a victim out "doesn't work well." About 300 pounds of pressure is needed to extract someone buried up to the waist and 900 pounds is needed for someone buried up to the shoulders.

According to CASA's website, the majority of people who get trapped in grain do not survive.

Loewen said if the victim's head get buried beneath the grain, a combination of the force of the grain pressing on the chest and lungs and a lack of oxygen will typically result in a recovery operation rather than a rescue.

The Arborg-Bifrost Fire Department is in the process of acquiring a grain-rescue kit, he said, and other Interlake fire departments will be able to use it.

Lorne Johnson from Johnson Seeds facilitated the training and the company also donated the grain for the training exercise, said Loewen. CASA had provided a grant for the training.

EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Arborg-Bifrost fire department and other Interlake fire departments learned how to rescue people trapped in grain.

Loewen released a statement on behalf of the fire department to thank CASA and the other organizations which sponsored it.

"The Arborg Bifrost Fire Department is very grateful for the opportunity to receive the training and doing it jointly with the neighbouring communities together. We would like to thank the CASA for providing it along with the sponsors Manitoba Canola Growers and Manitoba Ag Days," wrote Loewen. "We also had great local support from Johnson Seeds, who provided the wheat for the training day. It is the great local support that makes serving the Arborg, Bifrost, Riverton area enjoyable and a great community to be part of."

CASA offers a number of training courses to grain producers on topics such as grain engulfment and emergency management on the farm. A video demonstrating a grain-rescue operation is available on CASA's website.

MLA Johnson announces building sustainable communities grant recipients

Submitted by Manitoba government

Gimli MB – Derek Johnson MLA for Interlake-Gimli is pleased to announce local recipients of the Building Sustainable Communities Grant Program located in the constituency of Interlake-Gimli.

"I am proud to highlight our PC government's investments in local projects that will help build thriving, sustainable communities for everyone's benefit," said Johnson. "These grants will help boost community organizations during these unprecedented times as we begin to rebuild our economy beyond the pandemic."

The Building Sustainable Communities Program has been expanded for 2021 with up to $13 million available to support 305 community development projects from across the province. Selected project recipients in the constituency of Interlake-Gimli include:

- R.M. of Grahamdale Community Development Corporation New Washroom Facility in Moosehorn Wayside Park - $90,000.00
- Lundar Community Swimming Pool Splash Pad - $106,000
- Gimli Ski Club Companion Groomer/Ski Equipment - $2,500
- Les Petits Dorés Inc Natural Play Space Improvements - $58,000
- The Creative Cocoon Inc Solar Lighting River Walk - $10,920
- Riverdale Place Workshop Inc. Recycling Workspace Improvement - $37,500
- Gimli Glider Museum Inc. Tourism Footprint - $2,655
- Gimli Barvinok Dancers Inc. Cultural Costumes - $3,010
- Meleb Park Cumming School District Reunion Committee Inc. Town Monument Upgrade - $2,975
- Rural Municipality of West Interlake Ashern Centennial Hall Renovation - $12,850
- Gimli New Horizons 55+ Centre Inc. Energy Efficient Door & Window - $7, 782
- Moosehorn Community Club Inc. Kitchen Renovation - $32,725
- Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton Balaton Beach Park Playground - $20,568
- R.M. of Gimli Waterfront Conceptual Plan - $38,500
- South Interlake SnoRiders Inc. Groomer Upgrade - $62,500
- Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village Inc. Building Upgrade and Equipment Purchase - $7,967
- Bifrost Airport Commission Airport Upgrades - $5,067
- Grettir Co-op Inc. Lundar Arena Vestibule with Canopy & Posting Board - $25,450

The 2021 program intake has been expanded by over $5 million to include support for larger-scale capital projects with a maximum grant contribution of 50 per cent of eligible capital project costs of up to $300,000 as well as added funding to support pandemic recovery. The program continues to provide funding for other community projects at the current maximum grant of up to $75,000.

Eligible applicants for the Building Sustainable Communities Program include non-profit organizations, charitable organizations, municipalities and northern affairs community councils.

From 2019-20 to 2020-21, the program funded nearly 600 projects across the province, with almost $18.3 million.

For more information about the program, visit www.manitobago.ca.

About $900 worth of equipment and gas stolen during Inwood Cemetery break-in

By Patricia Barrett

Equipment and gas used to maintain the grounds of the Inwood Cemetery was stolen sometime last week, leaving community members stunned and upset.

Cemetery caretaker Jen Etter, who informed the community through the cemetery's Facebook page, told the *Express* she doesn't understand how someone could do such a thing to a community cemetery.

"This is very sad and shameful. Not only did they take what wasn't theirs, but they disrespected all who are buried in our cemetery and all the families and friends who have loved ones here," said Etter by phone last week.

The cemetery is located near Rosie's Café and the Tempo gas station on Highway 17, just before the highway turns north towards Narcisse and Poplarfield.

The items were stored in a locked utility shed on the cemetery grounds. The break-in and theft may have occurred sometime during the weekend of July 3-4.

"The graves and the headstones weren't damaged, thank goodness," said Etter, who has been the caretaker for over 10 years. "But they broke into the shed and stole equipment and all our fuel. It's heart-breaking."

Although Etter said the vegetation in the cemetery looks like "fall in there right now" because of persistently high temperatures and lack of rainfall, the cemetery grounds still need — and will need — tending to.

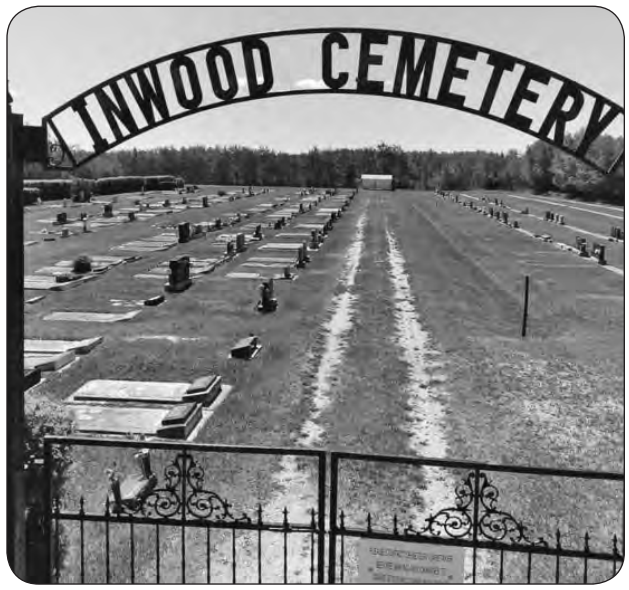
Lori Mott, who is president of the Inwood Cemetery Committee, said they think the break-in may have happened on the Sunday night as people who were at the cemetery on Monday to water vegetation around graves told her they noticed the door to the shed was open.

"The padlock on the shed was cut and around $900 worth of equipment and gas was stolen," said Mott by phone last week.

The cemetery is supported entirely through donations and sales. It doesn't get any funding from the Municipality of Armstrong.

"Inwood Cemetery is community-run. We survive on donations and plot sales," she said. "And we don't charge people for the perpetual care of the graves."

Anyone with information about the break-in and/or the stolen items can call Lori Mott at 204-278-3418.



EXPRESS PHOTO INWOOD CEMETERY FACEBOOK
Gas and equipment stolen during Inwood Cemetery break-in.

Manitoba ahead of schedule with vaccination milestones

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Manitoba as a whole is blowing past its vaccination milestones weeks ahead of schedule.

Premier Brian Pallister announced last Wednesday that we've already hit our Aug. 2 goal of seeing at least 75 per cent of eligible Manitobans with one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and 50 per cent with two. As of Monday, the rate was 76.3 per cent for the first shot and 57.2 per cent for the second.

"Manitobans are making the right choices to roll up their sleeves," Pallister said. "Not once but twice many Manitobans have already taken that step, but we need more. We need more to participate. Together, that's how we beat COVID."

New public health orders relaxing restrictions in recognition of the increased number of protected Manitobans were expected sometime this week.

Pallister noted reopening will continue to be slow and steady and made on the advice of medical professionals.

"I think everyone wants their lives back, but we all don't want a yo-yo effect," he stressed, pointing out we've seen that happen before in earlier waves of the pandemic. "We're going to take, no pun intended, conservative steps here to get our lives back.

"We're going to do it with caution in mind and the learnings that have come about as a consequence of the way we've dealt with this unprecedented situation over the last year and a half."

In a bid to encourage people to get their vaccinations, this week Wednesday, July 14, all vaccination super sites are hosting only walk-ins—no appointments necessary.

More than 20,000 vaccines will be available that day, including approximately 8,000 Pfizer vaccines earmarked for young people aged 12 to 17.

Our nearest super site is at the Access Event Centre in Morden, which has been accepting walk-ins regularly alongside booked appointments for weeks now.

Manitoba's next milestone, set for the September long weekend, is to have 80 per cent of eligible Manitobans with their first dose and 75 per cent with their second.

To reach that, the province needs to see approximately 33,000 more first doses and 100,000 second doses.

"We can do this," Pallister said.

At a briefing held later that same day, vaccination task force co-lead Johanu Botha noted that demand for first doses has begun to decline even as the number of available vaccines is on the rise.

"I think it's fair to say that for the first time, we're likely going to see that our vaccine supply is going to consistently be more than the daily demand," he said, noting the province is expected to receive hundreds of thousands of doses from the federal government over the next few weeks. "We have our vaccine distributors systems in place and ready to administer these ... but we can only get vaccines in arms when there are arms at these sites.

"The reality is that if you want a dose and don't have an appointment yet, we have one for you and we have one for you now."

Appointments can be made online at protectmb.ca or by calling (toll-free) 1-844-626-8222.

Pfizer-BioNTech says third dose of COVID vaccine may be beneficial

By Patricia Barrett

Pfizer-BioNTech say a third shot of their COVID-19 vaccine might be beneficial to maintain strong immunity against the virus and its more robust variants after real-world data from Israel show protection waning.

The two companies said they've seen "encouraging data" from an ongoing study looking at immunity levels offered by a third dose of their vaccine against the original virus strain (also called the wild type) and more highly transmissible variants such as beta (B1351).

"Initial data from the study demonstrate that a booster dose given 6 months after the second dose has a consistent tolerability profile while eliciting high neutralization titers against the wild type and the Beta variant, which are 5 to 10 times higher than after two primary doses," said the companies in a joint statement issued July 8.

Discussion about whether a third dose of Pfizer-BioNTech might be needed comes after Israel's Ministry of Health released real-world data showing the vaccine's efficacy declining six months after vaccination and failing to prevent both infections and symptomatic disease. However, the vaccine's efficacy in preventing serious illnesses "remains high."

The delta variant is becoming the dominant strain in Israel as well as in other countries, the statement reads. To that end, the companies are tweaking the vaccine to make it stronger against delta.

"While Pfizer and BioNTech believe a third dose of BNT162b2 [the vaccine] has the potential to preserve the highest levels of protective efficacy against all currently known variants including Delta, the companies are remaining vigilant and are developing an updated version of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine that targets the full spike protein of the Delta variant," says the release.

More definitive data from the study is expected in the coming weeks and the companies will be submitting that information to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the European Medicines Agency and other regulatory authorities, states the release.

Canadian health authorities have yet to advise on whether a third dose — or even a yearly schedule of COVID vaccinations — will be required to keep the virus and its variants at manageable levels.

SuperDog trainer helps owners connect with their pets

By Nicole Brownlee

Dogs have found a vacation home in a Winnipeg Beach hideaway.

Sammy Mar's SMART Dogs training has been active for seven years in the Interlake, but Mar has been involved in dog training for almost 20 years working with several facilities and even SuperDogs.

Mar moved her business from Teulon to Winnipeg Beach two years ago to establish a boarding facility.

"Where we are now, I call it a paradise for dogs," said Mar. "My goal has always been so someone [can] drop off their dogs. They don't have to worry about the dogs having fun. It's a safe place."

The property offers lots of room for the dogs to run and play outside, as well as an air-conditioned shelter for the furry friends to cool off on warm days.

"We have two play areas upstairs and downstairs, and then down the halls we have our boarding rooms, so when dogs stay with us overnight or anything like that, they don't stay in kennels. Each dog actually gets their own little room," said Mar.

The facility can accommodate approximately 20 dogs, but every day is different, especially as COVID-19 restrictions begin to loosen, said Mar.

"I'm seeing dogs [and people] that I haven't seen in a year and a half that are now coming out again," said Mar. "It's my business, but it's also my social life."

Jodi Coultas has been using SMART Dogs for over two years to work with her four-year-old American pitbull terrier, Capone, and plans to bring her recently added seven-week-old puppy of the same breed too.

"I'm so happy and so impressed with how my dog responds," said Coultas reflecting on her dog's time at Mar's. "She did all the groundwork and taught me how to correctly work with a dog."

Coultas lives a few hours north of Pine Falls in Bissett but said Mar is worth the drive.

"I've had such a good experience here. My dog's clean, you know. He's happy. He's well-balanced. I don't see a reason to go somewhere different," said Coultas.

"I have a great relationship with my dog because of all of the help she's given me."

Andrea Bjorklund has also been bringing her bulldog, Cane Corso, and pitbull to Mar for over two years but initially found SMART Dogs when looking for a kennel.

"It's hard to find someone to look after three big dogs," said Bjorklund from Stony Mountain. "Sometimes people are scared to look after big dogs because they don't know if they can necessarily control them."

EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Sammy Mar worked with SuperDogs for several years, training dogs to perform tricks, skills and routines before opening SMART Dogs in Winnipeg Beach.

While her dogs were at the facility, Mar assessed Bjorklund's dogs and gave her suggestions on how to help their behaviour.

"She's more training me to look after my dog than training the dog," said Bjorklund with a laugh.

Mar found Bjorklund's Cane Corso had anxiety issues, which Bjorklund had believed was aggression, and within a week of following Mar's guidelines, Bjorklund saw vast improvements.

"Every so often, when they do go to board, they do come back almost better trained," said Bjorklund. "Even though they're not there for training, they do get that one-on-one time with her."

To learn more about SMART Dogs, visit the SMART Dogs Facebook page.

St. Laurent beach fees create a splash for visitors

By Jennifer McFee

Ripples of change are flowing through St. Laurent, where new beach fees are creating quite a splash.

On June 29, the RM of St. Laurent posted a newsletter outlining the details of the Gros Arbre (Big Tree) Park Entry pilot project that impacts Sandpiper Beach.

The newsletter indicates that many people have been asking questions about the recently announced pilot project as well as the RM's new parks and beaches bylaw, which council passed on June 2. This new bylaw regulates public parks and beaches, including Gros Arbre (Big Tree) Park, which is owned by the RM.

Through this pilot project, visitors to the park will be charged $10 per vehicle, which includes the driver. In addition, it will cost $5 for each additional person, although kids six and under will be free.

Visitors also have the option to buy a seasonal pass for $100, which would cover the fees for two adults and three youth.

These fees will go directly towards the cost of maintaining and enhancing the park.

For full-time and seasonal ratepayers, they can get a free annual park pass through the RM office or park attendant, with one pass available per family. St. Laurent Reeve Cheryl Smith was not available for comment. Instead, CAO Hilda Zotter suggested the newsletter contains information on the subject.

"Our beaches are now considered a tourism and recreation destination; they are being promoted and advertised as such and visitors and tourists from all over the country as well as some international travellers are coming to our beaches," states the newsletter.

"Due to the influx and large increase of visitors and tourists, costs of maintaining, enhancing, repairing and monitoring the use of our infrastructure have increased exponentially. These costs should not be borne by our residents and property owners, hence the implementation of a fee charged to visitors."

St. Laurent property owners will need to show ID to verify their local address. If their ID doesn't show a St. Laurent address, the information will be verified through the ratepayer database, referenced by name and civic address.

In the future, the upcoming waste transfer site pass could also serve as proof of residency and ownership. Hours of operation will be from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The park building will remain open and be locked 30 minutes after sunset.

"We hope this clarifies some of the questions and concerns," the newsletter states. "As this is a pilot project, we thank everyone for their understanding and patience and constructive input."

Meanwhile, the RM of Gimli does not plan to make waves with a similar initiative.

For Gimli Mayor Lynn Greenberg, there's no need to change something that's working fine already.

"I think the best thing is to just leave it as it is. Gimli has been very successful over the years in attracting people to the community and we'll just leave it that way going forward," he said.

"A lot of the people that come, they support the local businesses. That's been happening for 100 years. We don't have to change anything now. We want to attract people, not scare them away."

BILL 64

FACT:

Eliminating school divisions and moving schools under one authority means creating a bigger, disconnected, centralized bureaucracy that is not in tune with local students' and communities' needs.

#LocalVoicesLocalChoices #ForEvergreen esd.ca

Some groups left out of vaccination card program

By Ashleigh Viveiros

It's been over a month since the provincial government launched its COVID-19 immunization card, making it possible for Manitobans to carry proof of vaccination both digitally and in their wallets.

But Callum Morrison is still waiting to find out when and if he'll be able to get one.

The wait isn't because he's not vaccinated — it's been well past two weeks since his second shot — but because Morrison is an international student.

As such, he doesn't have the Manitoba health card required to apply for the COVID-19 immunization card.

He's in the same boat as soldiers and temporary foreign workers serving and working in Manitoba, both of whom are eligible to get vaccinated free of charge but are either not issued provincial health cards or must wait months to get one.

It's a piece of bureaucracy that leaves the Altona area resident scratching his head.

"There's actually a large number of people who are perfectly legally entitled to be in Manitoba, who live here, who don't actually qualify for Manitoba health cards," Morrison said. "So now we have this system where even people who are vaccinated can't access these [COVID] cards. It seems madness to me, really.

"The only things on these cards is supposed to be your name and a QR code that says you've been vaccinated. So I really don't understand why a health card is needed at all."

Morrison moved to Canada from Scotland in 2017. After a stint working for a seed company in Morden, he went back to school to pursue a PhD in agriculture. His studies into cover crop usage have made him a familiar face across the Pembina Valley.

But that familiarity won't allow him to eat at a restaurant with someone from outside his household, even if they're both vaccinated, nor get him into a hospital or care home should he need to visit an ailing loved one. For that, he'll need to show proof of vaccination.

The government has said that those not eligible for the immunization card can get their vaccination record from a public health office.

But with the vast majority of Manitobans about to be carrying around these new cards, Morrison is concerned trying to prove the same with an unfamiliar paper vaccination record is going to cause more hassles than anything.

"First of all, I've yet to actually be able to get that vaccine record anyway," he pointed out. "But when I'm speaking to local businesses they're telling me, 'Well, I've never heard of this vaccine record.'

"It's on me every single time to try and explain what it is and that it's valid. And I guarantee you that this will eventually cause problems."

He doesn't blame people simply trying to follow the rules for looking askew at someone without a vaccination card, but he does feel the government needs to do more to address this issue.

"The government has put in basically a two-tier vaccination system where almost every single person in the province gets a vaccination card and then a very small percentage gets this record," Morrison said. "To me, it seems like it should be one of the easier fixes ... why not just issue everyone the card?

"If the government wants to actually incentivize vaccines, it's a funny way to do it where certain groups of people are [excluded like this]," he continued, voicing his worry some won't bother to get the shots at all as a result.

"I would have gotten vaccinated either way, but I have spoken to some international students who said they didn't even know they could get the vaccine," Morrison said, pointing out that one of the first things asked for when booking an appointment online is one's health card. He was able to book his vaccine shots over the phone — a much more timely process, he found — and then spent even more time at the vaccination site as staff tried to figure out what to do when he wasn't able to show a health card upon arrival. "The poor people whose job was to do it hadn't been given any training [on this matter]."

Morrison has reached out to every serving Manitoba MLA about this issue and has thus far only heard back from a few NDP members, including leader Wab Kinew.

"The Conservatives, sadly, haven't gotten back to me," he said.

"At the beginning, I thought these things would change very quickly because I had faith it was just teething problems," he said. "I do feel like after a month of these cards, they could have at the very least said, 'We admit that there are these problems. We're going to look into them. We're sorry'. ... That would have put a lot of people at ease."

EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Callum Morrison is an international graduate student in Manitoba, which means he is not eligible to get a COVID-19 immunization card — something he expects is going to cause headaches when he tries to prove his vaccination status.

Dr. Brent Roussin, Manitoba's chief public health officer, was asked at a media briefing last week whether any headway has been made to address the fact international students and others without Manitoba health cards can't get the immunization card.

"There is work being undertaken right now," he replied. "I don't have any specifics to share or an exact date on when we can announce anything, but there will be something upcoming."

As of press time, no new details on the matter had been released.

Free provincial parks entry through Sunday

Staff

There's still a few days left to enjoy this month's free provincial park entry.

The Manitoba government last week extended free entry to provincial parks beyond the traditional Canada Park's Day to a full week July 12-18.

"We have been listening to how much Manitobans love their provincial parks, and when the idea was raised by members of the public to expand the free access, we enthusiastically embraced it," said Conservation and Climate Minister Sara Guillemard. "All Manitobans should have the opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors and we are pleased to offer free park entry for a full week this summer."

Sunday is the last day vehicle permits will not be required to enter any provincial park, though overnight camping fees are still in effect if you're planning on camping out (head to www.manitobaparks.com or call 1-888-482-2267 to find open sites).

Government officials remind Manitobans that COVID-19 public health orders must be followed in the parks. This includes gathering limits.

Park visitor centres and museums are currently closed under public health orders, though interpreters offer a range of guided experiences at several parks. Trail hikes, historic site tours and guided paddles are available throughout the week. Information on park events can be found at www.manitobaparks.com and under the events tab on the Manitoba Parks Facebook page at www.facebook.com/MBGovParks.

Bill 64
EVERGREEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Bill 64 proposes to consolidate all school divisions under a single provincial authority. How will centralizing power, funding, and decision-making accurately address regional needs and improve upon the individual learning experiences of our students?

An Interlake snapshot: local photographer to share knowledge

By Nicole Brownlee

Armed with a camera, great lighting and patience, Catherine Sproat captures the beauty of the Interlake through a lens.

"There's so much beauty [in the Interlake]," said Sproat. "To try and capture it all would take more than one lifetime."

Photographing lakes, nature and wildlife in the Interlake came naturally to Sproat as she grew up visiting family in Matlock during the summer and on holidays.

Sproat shoots local products in her spare time but said she prefers photographing landscapes.

"It's kind of challenging compared to what I'm used to doing," said Sproat. "Product you have to have a specific light and equipment to shoot in a smaller space and smaller items."

When she does focus on landscapes, Sproat considers how the sun is creating highlights and shadows, the vibrancy of colours and different textures.

She's been working with cameras her whole life, but over the past decade, Sproat decided to start sharing her work as well.

"It started off more in the form of meditation and stress relief for myself, and then it just kind of expanded with people wanting to buy stuff and me creating things for them," said Sproat.

One of her most requested pieces is photos of piers in the Interlake.

"Everybody wants a picture of their pier," said Sproat. "A few years ago, there's eight piers in Dunnottar, and I photographed all eight of them."

Sproat enjoys photographing the Interlake because of the area's natural beauty.

EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Catherine Sproat has been working with cameras all her life and prefers shooting landscapes compared to products and portraits.

Last year because of COVID-19 restrictions many piers weren't open, said Sproat but she's hoping with loosening rules she'll be able to get back to her go-to photography spot.

While portrait and event photographers have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, artists like Sproat who usually work outside have also been impacted.

"Not just me but all small businesses have just suffered without having the access to people and places," said Sproat.

Working as a full-time educational assistant, Sproat also encourages her students to try photography.

"I've always suggested if they have an interest in stuff like that, they should pursue it … because a lot of schools offer photography," said Sproat.

Sproat started as an EA in the city in 1999 but hopes to move to the Interlake within a few years. In the meantime, Sproat plans to teach photography in the community throughout July.

To learn more about Sproat's upcoming classes and to check out her work, visit Catherine Sproat Photography on Facebook.

Sproat created a calendar last summer with shots of eight separate piers in the Interlake.

Beach reads: Steep Rock community spurs kids to read

By Nicole Brownlee

A community organization welcomes families to join weekly children's readings at Steep Rock Beach to encourage childhood literacy.

On Tuesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. during July and August, families can bring their children to enjoy a snack, some stories and a book to take home. The Steep Rock Beach park sponsors the group to cover all park admissions for families attending the readings and provides the pavilion to offer shade on hot days.

The Northern Interlake Early Childhood Development Coalition started in the community three years ago, and Steep Rock resident Sandy Smith continues the tradition.

"I'm a long-time foster parent for the last 20 years, and I've got little kids, and I understand how important it is to not only read to the kids, [but also] to encourage the kids to read," said Smith.

"Once you learn to read, the whole world opens up to you."

She tries to get the listening children to interact with the stories as she reads them to spark their interest, hopefully. On July 6, their first session of the season, even the parents were enjoying the stories.

"The parents were giggling at the books just the same as the kids were," said Smith.

Smith provides a variety of books that the kids can take home to read on their own.

"I have a wonderful time going shopping for books," said Smith.

With the help of the local library, Smith picks out three books to read aloud each week.

"We have kids from very little all the way up to, you know, 12-ish," said Smith. "The program is not designed for the older kids, but by no way am I ever going to turn anybody away."

She picks a variety of books but admits that Robert Munsch is a crowd favourite.

"If I'm ever stuck, I will pull out one of his, and nobody's ever walked away disappointed," said Smith.

"The whole point of the program is to keep kids interested in reading, and I personally feel that if it's a comic they're reading or instructions how to do something … that's great for me," she added.

This year, in addition to Smith reading to the children, Alann Fraser, principal of Alf Cuthbert School in Moosehorn, and Ruby Unger, also known by Rubee Potter, author of *Gramma's Rocks: Fossil's Adventure*, will also be joining the group.

"I think it will be nice for the kids to see an actual author and know that they might be able to do that too," said Smith.

EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Four-year-old Calaya enjoys reading and attending the Steep Rock Beach readings on Tuesday mornings.

Bifrost-Riverton to opt out of management of recreation commission, but continue funding

By Patricia Barrett

The Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton will no longer bear the financial risks it says are associated with the Arborg-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission (ABPRC), and will be opting out of a management agreement it has with the Town of Arborg.

The municipality and the town have a pro-rata share in the assets, revenues, expenses and liabilities of local boards, agencies and commissions, such as the ABPRC.

The municipality has the right to opt out of the ABPRC under a provision in Bylaw No. 6-91 and must provide three months' written notice.

It said it will pay its share of ABPRC's operational deficits and debts this year, but after Dec. 31 will be absolved from all liability. It will, however, continue to provide funding to ABPRC to ensure Bifrost residents can access facilities and programs.

In a letter dated June 24 to the Town of Arborg council, Bifrost-Riverton Reeve Brian Johnson wrote that municipal council had concerns about ABPRC's "lack of oversight" and "poor fiscal responsibility" in recent years, and opting out is necessary to ensure the municipality can best utilize taxpayer dollars.

"At this point in time, it is not sustainable for the municipality to continue to fund the commission and assume risk in the same manner as has been done in the past," Johnson wrote on behalf of council.

Over the past three years, ABPRC has sustained operating losses totalling $108,704 and an accumulated debt of $288,664, according to documents Bifrost-Riverton CAO Jordan Willner provided to the *Express* upon request. In 2020, ABPRC had an operating loss of $27,081. In 2019 it was $57,194. In 2018 it was $24,429.

A majority of council passed Resolution No. 172-2021 on June 10 to opt out of the agreement. The reeve, Deputy Reeve Colin Bjarnason and councillors Frode Andersen, Chad Johnson and David King voted in favour of the resolution while Coun. Gordon Klym voted against it.

Willner sent a letter to the Town of Arborg and ABPRC's recreation directors and board members to inform them of the municipality's decision and that it will not appoint a councillor or citizen representative to the board next year.

Both Willner and the reeve spelled out how the municipality intends to meet its current financial obligations with regard to ABPRC and a funding commitment going forward.

The municipality will cover ABPRC's 2020 operating deficit of $27,081. It already made an arrangement with Noventis Credit Union and paid off 50 per cent ($172,435.80) of ABPRC's outstanding letter-of-comfort debts.

ABPRC had obtained letters of comfort from the town and the municipality to obtain financing from Noventis. Letters of comfort provide a degree of assurance to a lender that a certain obligation will be met.

In 2022 the municipality will provide a fixed annual operating grant of $135,000 (which includes insurance costs) so that Bifrost residents won't be charged higher user fees at the Arborg-based recreation facilities, including the arena, water park and mini-golf course (the Town of Arborg holds title to facility land).

The municipality has asked ABPRC to agree, in writing, that it won't charge higher fees, and also asked that it provide the municipal CAO with a year-end report.

"We don't want our ratepayers to incur any kind of pay-per-use or service fees," said Willner by phone last week.

In addition to continuing its funding to the ABPRC, the municipality is open to considering additional funding for capital projects, he added.

ABPRC is run by a board that makes decisions on expenditures, user fees and debt management, along with other responsibilities, said Willner. But the municipality prefers a different model.

"We believe it would be a more effective form of governance if the Town of Arborg brought [ABPRC] in-house and run it like a recreation department," said Willner.

The municipality and the town have been working on a joint recreation master plan over the past few years in conjunction with a consulting firm, he said, and the plan is almost ready for release. The plan notes that it's rare to see volunteer boards having a high level of responsibility for managing debt and the facilities. The municipality thinks the focus should be shifted to programming.

Coun. Gordon Klym, who has sat on the ABPRC board for 16 months as a council representative and voted against opting out, said he agrees that ABPRC should be tasked with recreation programming rather than setting budgets, managing facility repairs and upgrades, paying bills and taking out loans.

"It's a messed-up system but we were moving in the right direction, towards having ABPRC focus on mostly programming," said Klym by phone last week. "We've been part of ABPRC for about 30 years and I think it's premature to opt out at this point. So that's why I voted against it."

In any municipality, recreation doesn't make money, he said. But for the Arborg and Bifrost areas, recreation enhances residents' quality of life and health, and it also helps draw tourism dollars to the area. The outdoor swimming pool, for example, brings people from across the Interlake.

Klym said he feels it's unfair to characterize the ABPRC as having somehow acted irresponsibly with money. Both the Town of Arborg council and the Bifrost-Riverton council have ultimate authority over ABPRC. ABPRC would have to set a budget for insurance, hydro and so forth before it knew actual costs. And it could obtain no funding or loans for facility repairs and operating expenses without the approval of both councils.

He said a few things concern him about funding moving forward.

First, the municipality's commitment is somewhat vague, he said. The commitment for 2022 is stated as $135,000, but there's no agreement for subsequent years. Having no idea how much money it can expect in future years will make it difficult for ABPRC to plan ahead. Added to the uncertainty is a municipal election in 2022. A new council may have different spending priorities.

Second, the municipality said it will be providing $135,000 in 2022, but it won't have a means of oversight.

"The RM is willing to give $135,000 to Arborg to run recreation, yet there'll be no [Bifrost-Riverton] councillor on the ABPRC board to not only help make decisions, but also understand the challenges they're facing and deliver monthly financial reports to the municipality as I've been doing," said Klym.

There has been a lot of backlash from and frustration among taxpayers regarding the municipality's decision to opt out, he said, because "people have grown up here and they use these facilities."

"Not only do they want to see the RM continue to be involved on behalf of them," said Klym, "but they want to make sure the recreation facilities are receiving the funding they need to continue operating."

Ashern/Lundar RCMP respond to firearms call

Staff

Ashern/Lundar RCMP responded to a report of two suspects, one of which was armed with firearms, who were threatening residents at a home in Ashern on July 1 at 12:25 a.m.

As officers responded, the two males fled in a vehicle. With the assistance, of RCMP Police Dog Services, officers located the vehicle at a nearby motel and located the two males who were believed to be involved in the incident. The males were placed under arrest and officers recovered a small quantity of pills and firearms (one of which had a suppressor), as well as prohibited brass knuckles and a prohibited switchblade.

Tyler Schellenberg, a 21-year-old male from Ashern, has been charged with:

- Pointing a firearm
- Unauthorized possession of a firearm
- Possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose
- Possession of a restricted firearm
- Possession of a controlled substance

Randall Schaffer, a 30-year-old male from the RM of St. Clements, has been charged with:

- Pointing a firearm
- Unauthorized possession of a firearm
- Possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose
- Possession of a restricted firearm
- Possession of a controlled substance

Both were remanded into custody and appeared in Winnipeg Provincial Court on July 2, 2021.

EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Officers recovered a small quantity of pills and firearms.

Local flora featured in Interlake tea and coffee brand

By Nicole Brownlee

One local business is capturing the taste and essence of the Interlake through steeping teas and steaming cups of coffee.

Christene Gawlik launched The Village Brew Co. in May after noticing a lack of quality tea and coffee products in the Interlake during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"My husband and I [are both] avid tea and coffee drinkers," said Gawlik. "Quarantine had kind of like toppled everything upside down, and I recognized a market gap."

Gawlik started working on prototypes and approaching Interlake vendors, Park Place Meats & Grocery in Winnipeg Beach, and the Matlock General Store in early 2021 to carry Brew Co. products and was met with enthusiasm.

"[I] brought in a couple of samples, and some branding and they were both really excited and expressed strong support for me right away and offered me some tips," said Gawlik.

Offering her products in local stores and tapping into the local microeconomy was one of her main goals while creating Brew Co.

The Village Brew Co. offers a medium-dark roast coffee in regular and decaf and seven types of teas featuring locally inspired flavours.

EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Christene Gawlik and her 14-year-old daughter Daria will be showcasing The Village Brew Co. teas and coffees at several farmers' markets this summer.

"Our emphasis and part of our vision is really to allow customers to easily access quality teas and coffees every day in their community," said Gawlik.

In addition to Park Place in Winnipeg Beach and the Matlock General Store, the teas and coffees are also available at the Gimli Junction and the Sugar Me Cookie Boutique in Gimil.

"I think it's a great product," said Michelle Wierda, owner of Sugar Me Cookie. "I love how she's linked it to the Interlake and the story behind her teas, and that makes it more personal and close to home."

Wierda also said she feels proud to help another small business in the community.

"People did that for me, so I love that I now have the opportunity to do that for somebody else," said Wierda.

Despite living in the Whytewold area for less than two years, Gawlik was familiar with the Interlake, having spent summers at a family cottage in Whytewold growing up, and wanted to incorporate aspects of the local environment into her beverages.

"[We wanted to] emphasize the flavours here in the Interlake, making sure that we're blending our products and our loose-leaf teas with things that could grow in the Interlake or that were iconic of the Interlake," said Gawlik.

Her wish came true with teas like Cruisin' Gimli Road #232, which blends a traditional green tea with lime tree flowers, lavender, marigold flowers and safflowers.

The business lists seven types of tea alongside a medium-dark roast coffee offered with caffeine or as a naturally processed decaf.

"Some [teas] are very nice on ice in the hot summer days, and some are very nice perhaps blended with an extra something for happy hour," said Gawlik.

For an iced option, Gawlik recommends The Red Engine - All Aboard the Rooibos!, which is a combination of rooibos, orange peels, marigold flowers, sunflowers, safflowers, rose petals and cornflowers.

"I was offering that as a sample at the [market in Dunnottar], and that was very popular on that day," said Gawlik.

Accompanied by her husband Ted and 14-year-old daughter Daria, Gawlik plans to visit farmers' markets over the summer to showcase Brew Co. products.

To learn more about Village Brew Co., visit The Village Brew Co. Facebook page or the-village-brew-co.myshopify.com.

Boomers Funny Farm open for business with COVID guidelines

By Jules Stevenson

Boomer the donkey is the namesake for a brand-new petting zoo, and his owner, Janet Thorvaldsen, says he comes with a lot of personality.

"Pretty much it's my goal to make everyone fall in love with donkeys," says Thorvaldsen.

They hold one-hour farm tours, where families can collect chicken eggs and pet the animals. They provide cups of oats and treats to feed the animals.

Boomer's Funny Farm has goats, lambs, cows and ponies. They also have baby animals who were neglected by their mothers and need to be bottle fed, which guests are allowed to do.

"Everyone is so amazed when I open the gate and say 'Come in' and all the animals come to them. You can pet them and hug them. Our donkeys love to cuddle," says Thorvaldsen.

EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Janet Thorvaldsen and her son take a selfie with a donkey.

She says they've had many families bring their kids for their birthdays, since they can't do anything else right now.

They also have areas like Donny's Playground, Molly's Picnic and BBQ and Sparky's Fire Pit Area.

Boomer's Funny Farm also has a boutique where they sell handmade goods like tote bags, mugs and donkey stuffed animals, just like Boomer.

"We're really trying to give people something fun to do," says Thorvaldsen.

Thorvaldsen started Boomer's Funny Farm with her husband after they decided to buy chickens for their three young boys, ages five, three and one. Thorvaldsen says this was just the beginning.

Soon, they started receiving messages about horses and donkeys in need of homes, too.

Thorvaldsen started a Facebook page to share photos of the animals and received messages from families wanting to visit their farm.

Thorvaldsen says they're doing very well. They are booked some days from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and anticipate they'll be even busier once schools end.

Boomer's Funny Farm is located at 18064 Gimli Park Rd., 1 kilomere west of Highway 8. Feel free to call or text at 1-204-891-0211 or email boomersfunnyfarm@hotmail.com.

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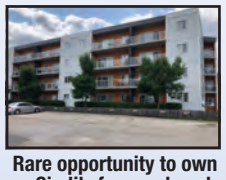

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2021 FILMS

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About Endlessness
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Golden Arm
Goodnight Goodnight
Grandma Hófí
Hey, Happy!
Indian Road Trip
Program #1: Indigenous Horror Focus
Program #2: Indigenous Horror Focus
Inventing the Future
Ken Leishman: The Flying Bandit
Kímmapiiyipiyssini: The Meaning of Empathy
Last and First Men
The Life of Jo Menell
Man Nishma Manitoba? (What's up Manitoba?)
Mayor
Moffie
Mogul Mowgli
My Name is Baghdad
The Nature of Nicholas
Night Falls
No Ordinary Man
One of Ours
Psycho Goreman
Rides of Justice
Shorts #0: Friendly Manitoba
Shorts #1: Manitoba Shorts in Competition
Shorts #2: Daughters Rising
Shorts #3: The Medium is The Message
Shorts #4: In Close Quarters
Shorts #5: Break Your Heart Until it Opens
Shorts #6: News Works by the Indigenous Filmmakers Association
Program #7: Champ Libre (Free Range)
Shorts #8: 10 - Year Pitch Retrospective
Shorts #9 The 48 Hour Film Contest
Some Kind of Heaven
Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back
Street Gang: How We Got to Seasame Street
The Strongest Man in the World
Sugar Daddy

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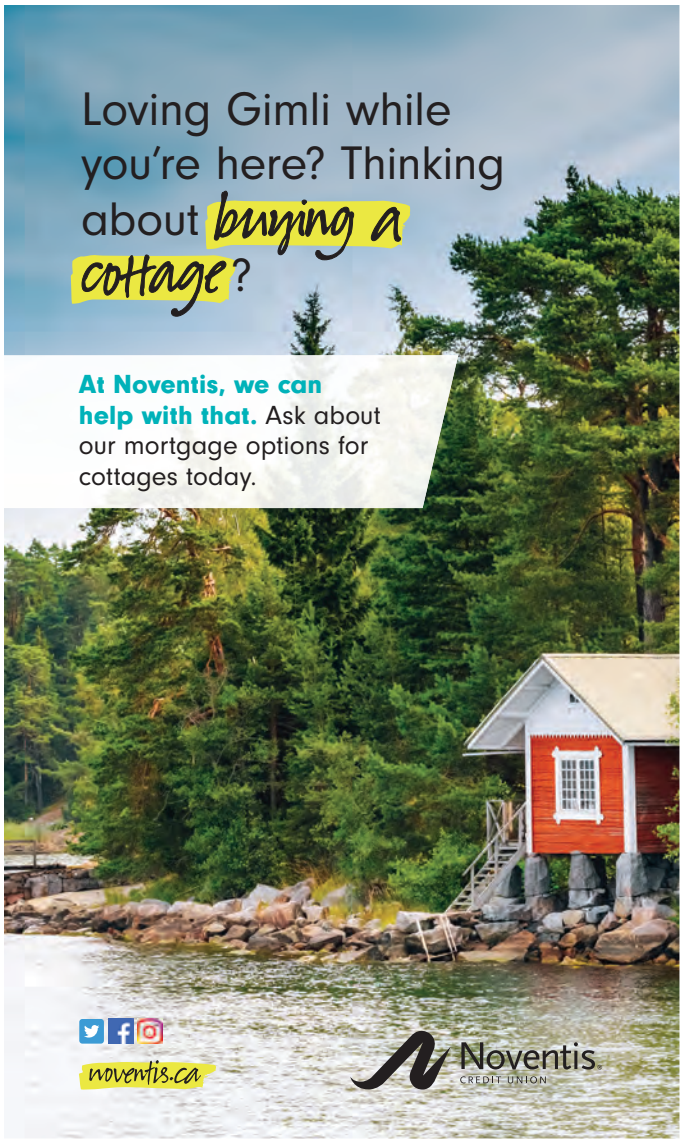

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on the Day You Were Born

e-In Schedule

nightly – Wed, July 21 to
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MB, 1 Fourth Ave

n Roadtrip
esday, July 21 | 10 PM
n Arm
day, July 22 | 10 PM
nertime
, July 23 | 10 PM
Kind of Heaven
day, July 24 | 10 PM
o Goreman
day, July 24 | Midnight
Vars: The Empire Strikes Back
ay, July 25 | 10 PM

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- In the event of cancellation due to COVID restrictions or weather, all tickets WILL be refunded.
- If you have questions about the event or ticketing, please email boxoffice@gimlifilm.com.

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Grasshoppers and heat disastrous combination; Interlake farmers, towns threatened

By Patricia Barrett

Grass is running low, crops are being destroyed and cattle are heading to auction in the Interlake as a lethal combination of persistently high temperatures and drought-loving grasshoppers moves in.

The repercussions on farmers and farm families are serious enough, but the unfolding disaster could also have devastating spinoff effects on local economies.

Leroy Loewen is part of a family-run farm in the community of Silver, just south of Arborg in the southern part of the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton. He said pastures in the area have been decimated.

"With the heat and the grasshoppers combined, the pasture behind our place is brown. It looks as if we've sprayed weed killer on it," said Loewen by phone last week.

Grasshoppers hatch well during a dry year and the situation looks dire for all farmers, he said. He feels particularly bad for beef producers as they're very vulnerable right now; there should be "no question of running out of grass," but they are.

"At this time of year, we should have tall green grass and it should last for the cattle for a number of months yet. But we're getting to the point where producers are going to have to supplement hay when pastures should be supporting animals 100 per cent," said Loewen. "There's probably going to be a need for hay here to supplement pasture feeding. This is dire for beef producers."

Along stretches of Highway 7, where it passes through Silver, Loewen said the pavement is discoloured from hordes of grasshoppers squished on the road.

"You can see that the highway is a different colour from the grasshoppers that have been driven over," said Loewen. "There are other places like this, but in Silver it's really noticeable."

In the northern part of Bifrost-Riverton, Ledwyn-area grain farmer Gordon Klym said the grasshoppers are mowing fields clean.

"They've devastated the pastures and they're moving into grain. Farmers are spraying, but a couple of days later they've got to spray again," said Klym by phone. "The grasshoppers were bad last year, and I

EXPRESS PHOTO BY LANA MEIER
Grasshoppers thrive in a hot, dry year.

Continued on page 19

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Your FARM

> GRASSHOPPERS, FROM PG. 18

think they'll be worse this year."

As far as his own land is concerned, he said he's not sure how things are going to play out in terms of a harvestable crop.

"At this point in time it's hard to differentiate between how much damage the drought is causing and how much the grasshoppers are causing," he said. "We see the grasshoppers and we go out and spray. We see flea beetles and we spray. But at the end of the day, if you've got no crop growing because it's too darn dry, are you really doing any good?"

Bifrost-Riverton farmers are doing what they can to get a crop, he said, but it seems as though they're "fighting a losing battle."

For a second year running, Interlake municipalities are declaring a State of Agricultural Disaster, which triggers requests to both the federal and provincial governments for immediate assistance for things such as paying freight costs to bring in feed, compensation to drill new wells and tax deferrals. The municipalities of St. Laurent and Coldwell have already declared disasters, and last week Bifrost-Riverton issued its own declaration.

In addition to "severe drought" and a "critical grazing situation," the recent manifestation of grasshoppers has resulted in "severe crop and vegetation damage," states the resolution. Producers are now having to sell off their livestock because feed and the cost of freight is prohibitive.

Keystone Agricultural Producers' District 10 (Interlake, north of Selkirk) representative Paul Gregory said the region is in its third year of drought. The Interlake is no stranger to dry conditions but "not this early in the year and not with this ambient heat." Apart from the October 2019 snowstorm, the Interlake has had little moisture.

And grasshoppers are the product of dry cycles, he said. A warm, dry spring this year came on the heels of a mild winter and has allowed the eggs and the insects to flourish.

"Grasshoppers eat grass, but when they get hungry, guess what? Anything will do, including canola, trefoil crops and even alfalfa," said Gregory, who is also president of Interlake Forage Seeds in Fisher Branch. "This is anecdotal, but my brother-in-law told me he found dead grasshoppers before he sprayed; there are so many grasshoppers competing for food that some are starving."

It's not only the grasshoppers going hungry but so too are cattle. As Interlake pastures wither from the heat and the voracious insects, one thing people can count on is "more cows for sale," said Gregory. It makes "no economic sense" for producers to shell out for expensive hay and feed.

"There's nothing for the cows to eat. There might be some pastures that are in OK shape right now, but very quickly with this coming weekend's heat [July 10-11] it will be 32, 34 Celsius and they'll be done. There won't be any pastures in good shape after this. For anyone north of the Trans-Canada Highway, it's looking tough."

The disaster will naturally have a domino effect on rural communities, he said. Big farm producers will get through, but 10-15 small farm families could go bankrupt if they can't make ends meet. That means there will be fewer people to help support local businesses and keep towns ticking along.

Retail sales for his company, which exports seed to China, the U.S. and Europe, are important, but what's more important is the "future of our towns," he said. Fisher Branch, for instance, used to have multiple farm dealerships, lots of stores and a couple of banks. But "that's all done now" because of an exodus of people from agriculture.

"We saw the negative effect on towns when BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] hit. It changed towns like Fisher Branch, Ashern, Eriksdale and other towns along Highway 6. They would be different today if they had more cattle producers," said Gregory. "A number of my friends who had cattle told their kids to go to Alberta and don't come back to Manitoba because it's too risky and there's no money in farming. If we had a safety net back then or something that would have helped farmers out, there would be way more people in our towns."

The current "safety net" for disasters such as this is a federal-provincial support program called AgriStability. The federal government pays 60 per cent and provinces pay 40 per cent of "eligible" agriculture losses.

The only problem is the program got "watered down" over the years to the point where coverage is "fairly marginal," said Gregory.

The federal Liberal government under Justin Trudeau reached out to Manitoba and other western provinces in 2020, wanting to "tweak the program a little more in our favour" and "bring coverage back to where it could help producers." After about six months of negotiations, Manitoba rejected it.

In a January news release, KAP said it was hoping the province would support enhancements to AgriStability's reference margin limits and increase the compensation rate from 70 to 80 per cent. President Bill Campbell wrote that the program can, with some adjustment, provide "effective support" for producers, and if the province failed to support the enhancements, it would "represent a failure to protect producers and jeopardize the agriculture industry into the future."

Gregory said farmers are in "desperate straights" right now.

"We need long-term safety nets," he said. "We're competing on a world stage. European and American farmers have security. When there's a climate disaster in those regions, farmers are supported. And that means farm families will be there further down the road to pay taxes."

To the best of his knowledge, Gregory said he's not aware of any provincial ad-hoc support for Interlake producers at this time.

"I think the province is well aware of the seriousness of what's going on in this area," said Gregory, "but as far as any hard cash or ad-hoc assistance, I know of nothing yet."

The province's agriculture department acknowledged the *Express'* request for comment on relief but did not provide answers.

Happy hour takes a hit: No amount of alcohol is safe, brain-imaging study finds

By Patricia Barrett

Bacchus surely wouldn't be pleased to hear that an English medical study has found that no amount or type of alcohol is safe for consumption in relation to brain health and that public health drinking guidelines should be revised.

Wine, which is often hyped as a healthier alcohol option because of the polyphenols (natural antioxidants) found in grapes, is not excused from the findings.

The study titled "No safe level of alcohol consumption for brain health: observational cohort study of 25,278 UK Biobank participants" was carried out by researchers at the University of Oxford and is one of the largest imaging investigations to date on the impact of alcohol consumption on the brain. Published as an online preprint in May, it has yet to be peer-reviewed.

Researchers looked at the relationship between moderate alcohol consumption and brain health in 25,378 participants whose average age was 54. They tried to determine the point at which alcohol intake becomes harmful and whether certain groups in the population are at higher risk.

They found no amount of ethanol — the chemical name for alcohol or ethyl alcohol — to be safe. Ethanol and its breakdown product acetaldehyde are toxic and lead to cell death.

"No safe dose of alcohol for the brain was found. Moderate consumption is associated with more widespread adverse effects on the brain than previously recognised," the researchers wrote. "Individuals who binge-drink or [have] high blood pressure and BMI [body mass index] may be more susceptible."

There were no differences between wine, beer or spirits (whiskey, rye, vodka, etc.), even though those beverages contain a different percentage of alcohol, the researchers wrote. And there is little evidence behind claims that red wine has beneficial effects because of its concentration of polyphenols. Those claims are likely associated with a higher socioeconomic status.

"We found no evidence to suggest alcoholic beverage type confers differences in risks to the brain," the researchers wrote. "This supports the hypothesis that it is ethanol itself, rather than other compounds in the beverage, that is on the biological pathway to damage."

Study participants answered a questionnaire in which they were asked for their alcohol intake in an average week. Those who drank less frequently were asked about their average monthly intake. They were also asked for the number of glasses consumed, which was converted into U.K. units then grams of pure ethanol. Participants underwent an MRI brain scan, at which time cognitive function was assessed. MRI scans can detect changes in the brain before clinical symptoms appear.

Almost half of the participants (48.2 per cent) drank above the U.K.'s low risk drinking guidelines, which stipulate no more than 14 units (or 112 grams) of alcohol a week. Most of the participants (76.9 per cent) drank one type of beverage — wine. Frequent binge-drinking was associated with younger age, male sex and more educational qualifications.

The brain scans showed neurodegenerative effects: the volume of grey matter, the microstructure of white matter and vascular damage in the brain were all negatively affected by alcohol consumption.

The researchers also found that people with higher blood pressure (hypertension) and higher BMI increased their risk of brain harm by drinking alcohol.

Hypertension may "exacerbate alcohol-related brain harm by facilitating the diffusion of ethanol throughout brain tissue," they wrote. Binge-drinking and subsequent periods of withdrawal (withdrawal leads to inflammatory and other processes) both result in neuronal death.

The researchers said their study's strength lies in its very large sample size, which provides "great statistical power to detect associations" across the cortex (the outermost layer of the brain made up of primarily grey matter, which processes information), the subcortical structures (controlling memory, emotion, hormones) and the cerebellum (voluntary movement, balance). They accounted for age and smoking, possible confounders to the findings.

However, they noted their study has some limitations: participants, who were solicited by invitation, were healthier, better educated, less deprived and less ethnically diverse than the general population; there was a reliance on participants' self-reported alcohol consumption; the proportion of heavy drinkers or alcohol-dependent participants was "extremely low" — all of which could have skewed the findings.

As to the duration of drinking needed to cause an effect on the brain and whether there is heightened vulnerability to ethanol during particular life periods, such as during adolescence and older age when dynamic brain changes occur, are "unclear" and future studies are needed, the researchers wrote.

Moderate alcohol consumption is "common" and is "often viewed as harmless to brain health," they wrote. But with diseases such as Alzheimer and other forms of dementia, as well as ethanol's effect on people with hypertension and a higher BMI, public health guidelines on drinking should be reconsidered.

"Without disease-modifying treatments for neurodegenerative disease, there is a necessary focus on modifiable risk factors such as alcohol," the researchers wrote. "Thus, even small adverse effects of moderate drinking on the brain have substantial public health relevance."

Manitoba conservation officer resource enforcement update

Submitted

Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development advises that conservation officers are continuing enforcement to protect Manitoba's natural resources including compliance checks for fisheries, addressing illegal hunting, and supporting wildfire prevention and suppression.

On June 19, conservation officers from the Riverton Compliance Area were conducting a commercial fishing compliance patrol in the Hollow Water area of Lake Winnipeg. Officers located a boat with three people (helpers) pulling an improperly marked commercial gill net without a licensed commercial fisher present. As a result, two nets, five tubs of fish and various commercial fishing gear was seized. The commercial fisher responsible for the helpers was issued a ticket under section 14.3(4), the Fisheries Act (Manitoba) for failing to participate in fishing CF nets. The set fine for this offence is $486. The commercial fisher had been warned about this practice previously, so the helpers were each issued a ticket, Section 6, fishing licensing regulation for commercial fishing without a license. The set fine for this offence is $1,296.

That same day, officers also found a boat with a single fisher pulling a net. The net did not clearly identify the owner, or type of net so the net and one tub of fish was seized. A ticket, section 14(2), fishing licensing regulation for fishing an improperly marked gill net was issued, with a set fine of $672.

The following week, conservation officers from the Riverton District were again conducting commercial fishing compliance in the Hollow Water area on Lake Winnipeg and found a series of illegal commercial fishing nets. Commercial nets in this area must have a mesh size of 89 millimetres (3.5 inches) or larger, but officers found nets in use that measured 80 to 81 mm (3.1 to 3.2 in.). Mesh sizes are regulated to prevent small and immature fish from being caught. Officers seized the nets, and issued a summons under Manitoba Fisheries Regulations, section 45(2). A conviction carries a minimum sentence of a one-year commercial fishing licence suspension.

On June 26, Snow Lake District conservation officers and park patrol officers conducted an aerial patrol of Wekusko Lake following a tip that anglers were fishing in an area that is closed to fishing from April 1 to June 30 to protect spawning walleye. Officers observed a boat with people who appeared to be fishing in the closed area so they launched a boat patrol. Officers found a boat with five occupants fishing several kilometres into the closed area. The anglers were charged under the Manitoba Fishery Regulations for "catch and retain fish during the closed time." Officers seized 17 walleye, five fishing rods and issued restitution notices for the fish that were caught in the closed area. This amounted to $1,435 in fines and $714 in restitution. All fish will be donated to people in need within the community.

Following the successful conclusion of an investigation earlier this year that resulted in a significant seizure of walleye, conservation officers recently donated more than 200 whole walleye to Siloam Mission in Winnipeg. The fish were seized in the spring and had been safely stored until they were cleared for donation. The walleye were seized after officers found people dip netting in the Turtle River, near Ste. Rose du Lac.

For information on the status of fires, maps, travel restrictions, burning permit cancellations or other restrictions, go to www.gov.mb.ca/wildfire/ or follow the Twitter account at https://twitter.com/mbgovnews.

Manitoba's recreational angling and hunting regulations can be found in both the Anglers' Guide and Hunting Guide. Both documents can be found at www.gov.mb.ca/fish-wildlife/.

Home away from home: Farm north of Arborg welcomes visitors

By Nicole Brownlee

A proposed "vacation farm" hopes to foster relationships and act as a city getaway.

Owning over three hectares of land tucked away from bustling traffic, Alvina and Tim Reimer plan to create a place for travellers and tourists to stop, enjoy a home-cooked meal and good company.

The Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton approved the Reimer's project on May 13, but the two had been mulling over the decision for years.

"It has evolved over the years," said Alvina Reimer.

"We have all kinds of dreams," said Tim Reimer. "But we're starting pretty small."

They always thought about opening something in the realm of hospitality, said Alvina.

"It's not just for having a place to sleep, it's not just about having food, it's about, you know, relationships," said Alvina.

The couple plan to extend their deck to create more space for visitors to eat outside and build a two-car garage with a bathroom facility and shower. They also want to construct a Bunkie, which is a small log cabin with a base of 100 square feet that has a seating area and loft with space for a king-sized bed.

"It's really meant to be time away, getting away from noise and concrete," said Alvina.

After working as an independent caterer for 25 years, Alvina has become a Manitoba Country Vacation's Association member, which allows her to cook meals commercially without an industrial kitchen.

One of her dreams is to have people visit their property, walk through the garden and pick out the vegetables they want to include in their dinner, said Alvina.

"I know that when I just cook food and just make food for people to eat, it's a good thing," said Alvina. "But it is not complete without having also done more than that, more than just the food."

"They wouldn't just show up for the food," said Tim. "It would be for a family-friendly place."

Allowing visitors to create a connection with the community and the Reimer's home has been an increasingly important motivation for the project throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, said Alvina.

"Family is really, really important to me," said Alvina, who works part-time with Child and Family Services. "COVID has really brought it out, but we need connection. We need to connect with each other. Nothing replaces that."

EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Alvina and Tim Reimer plan to construct a Bunkie from Bunkie Life to create a space for travellers to stay on the property while exploring the community.

With four children and six grandchildren spread across the continent, the Reimers are familiar with having rotating visitors at their home.

"Having four to 10 vehicles on our yard and people coming for extended meals or supper evenings is a normal day pre-COVID," said Tim.

The couple hopes to complete their renovations within a year.

Lakeside campground offers rural escape for outdoor enthusiasts

By Nicole Brownlee

A new campground near the Narrows in the RM of Oakview has opened, offering lakeside tenting, kayaking, fishing and more.

Sebastian Anthikatt-Francis bought the property in September 2019, less than three months after moving to St. Laurent from Edmonton. He had wanted to get the ball rolling last summer, but the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted his plans.

"Now is sort of the perfect conditions," said Anthikatt-Francis.

He has worked the past several years as an immigration consultant while running Gratton's Store in St. Laurent with the help of his wife and two children, but Anthikatt-Francis said he's always dreamed of the rural lifestyle.

"It was always an ambition to have rural property," he said.

"Even though I've never farmed before," he added with a laugh.

Anthikatt-Francis began to fantasize about owning farmland while working as a lawyer in Kerala, India.

"I personally wanted a hobby farm for a long time in my life," he said. "I had always been in academic circles, so I didn't have a real chance to become a farmer or to have a taste of farm life."

With over 300 acres of property, Anthikatt-Francis hopes the land will continue to grow and develop with cabins and hobby farms.

"Maybe they can have a few chickens or maybe some goats, you know, like whatever their fancies lead them to," said Anthikatt-Francis.

"I have big dreams for the project."

While he waits for zoning approval to construct cabins on the lakeside property, Anthikatt-Francis said he wants people to enjoy the pure nature of the area while staying at the campground.

"Rural life is really enriching," said Anthikatt-Francis. "It's an opportunity for everybody, and they are also supporting a local business."

Visitors can pay daily rates to stay on the grounds or purchase memberships for up to three years to reserve a space for them to stay for over 100 days. These memberships will help pay for the maintenance of the property.

Tents and kayaks are also available for rent at the Tourist Village.

EXPESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Twenty-five lakeside campsites are available at Lake Manitoba Tourist Village, with tents and kayaks available for rent.

With over 3,500 metres of shoreline, there's lots of space for visitors to explore and take advantage of the shallow water without being interrupted by boats, said Anthikatt-Francis.

He also hopes to connect with local businesses to offer more amenities year-round at the grounds.

"If any local community member wants to rent out his ATV, or snowmobile or any resources with any customers of the project," he added.

To learn more about Lake Manitoba Tourist Village, visit lakemanitobatouristvillage.ca or the Lake Manitoba Tourist Village Facebook page.

Fisher River elders welcomed home 35 years ago

By Nicole Brownlee

The Ochekwi-Sipi Personal Care Home celebrates 35 years in operation this month, a milestone that marks when the Fisher River Cree Nation community was able to welcome their elders home.

Before Ochekwi-Sipi opened, Fisher River's elders who needed specialized care were sent to personal care homes away from the community.

"We had elders in Sagkeeng, Sioux Valley, different care homes throughout the province," said Chief David Crate.

Brenda Hart has worked at Ochekwi-Sipi since the PCH opened on July 2, 1986, when she was 31 years old and remembers lobbying with other community members to establish a care home in Fisher River.

"Past leadership with former Chief Wesley Hart heard and listened to our people's voices," said Hart. "It was their dream to keep our elders here and bring home those who had gone away."

Ochekwi-Sipi opened its doors to 30 communities including, Little Grand Rapids First Nation, Paungassi First Nation and even James Bay, Ont., said Hart.

Since 1986, 350 residents have passed through Ochekwi-Sipi through respite services, short- or long-term care.

> "IT WAS THEIR DREAM TO KEEP OUR ELDERS HERE AND BRING HOME THOSE WHO HAD GONE AWAY."

"Change is definitely a huge factor throughout the 35 years," said Hart. "The pandemic period, evacuations, renovations … but change is good."

Hart has worked as a health-care aide, nursing unit clerk, support personnel and most recently as a COVID-19 support worker during her time at Ochekwi-Sipi.

"I like being of assistance to whoever needs help," said Hart.

Ochekwi-Sipi created several jobs within the community, giving Fisher River residents a place to work and earn qualifications close to home.

With the Peguis First Nation community, Fisher River offers a licensed practical nursing program every few years as well as health-care aide training.

EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Ochekwi-Sipi Personal Care Home opened 35 years ago this July, which allowed the community to welcome back elders who had been sent across the province for specialized care.

"Training is one part of the ongoing support to the personal care home to ensure that we have our own members trained in the health-care field," said Crate.

The elders can also feel more comfortable adjusting to life in a personal care home because they recognize the staff from the community.

"The elders that are at our care home know our staff, our people. It makes it an easier transition for our members going into the care home because there's people there that they already know," said Crate.

"I think it's a good thing that families know that there is a place within the community that's there to support our members as they get older and know that there's quality care provided," said Crate.

Ochekwi-Sipi hopes to celebrate the PCH's 35th anniversary with music, entertainment and an opportunity to visit residents throughout the day when COVID-19 restrictions ease.

Bell MTS launching innovative Wireless Home Internet service in rural Manitoba

Fast Internet experience with 50/10 data access speeds and no overage fees

Staff

Bell MTS announced the official launch of Wireless Home Internet (WHI) service in Manitoba, bringing enhanced broadband access to eligible homes in 12 communities, with approximately 40,000 rural and remote locations planned by the end of 2021. WHI is 5G-capable technology delivered over Bell's wireless network using 3500 MHz spectrum, enabling access speeds of up to 50/10 (50 Megabits per second download/10 Mbps upload) with no overage fees.

Fully funded by Bell and designed to connect more rural and remote locations with next- generation broadband Internet connectivity, the Wireless Home Internet program is part of Bell's accelerated network investment plan to support Canada's recovery from the COVID crisis and ongoing leadership in broadband communications. With a positive investment climate reflecting federal support for the development and expansion of key infrastructure, Bell is investing up to an additional $1.7 billion in capital over the next two years to accelerate the rollouts of its next-generation WHI, fibre and 5G networks. This is in addition to the approximately $4 billion in capital that Bell has typically invested in broadband networks over the last decade.

"Wireless Home Internet has proven extremely popular in rural locations in other parts of Canada, and Bell MTS is proud to take our network investment to the next level by bringing this innovative service to Manitoba," said Ryan Klassen, vice-chair of Bell MTS & Western Canada. "By leveraging the scale and quality of Bell's high-performance, fibre-connected wireless networks, we're delivering fast, reliable broadband access to residents in smaller communities and rural regions throughout the province."

Faster Internet for rural Manitobans

Wireless Home Internet is beginning to roll out to eligible homes in the following Manitoba communities: Dauphin, Gimli, Grand Beach, Lac du Bonnet, Libau, Peguis First Nation, Shilo, Sidney, Victoria Beach, Whitemouth, Winkler and Woodlands. Bell MTS has WHI coverage planned for approximately 40,000 locations in rural Manitoba by the end of 2021, part of Bell's broader plan to eventually offer WHI service to one million rural households across Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the need for better broadband access so all Manitobans have access to high-quality internet," said Denys Volkov, executive director of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM). "The AMM welcomes this expanded service offering as reliable broadband, particularly in rural Manitoba, is key to future economic development and growth."

"In the 21st century, high-speed Internet is critical infrastructure for our entrepreneurs, farmers and families," said Chuck Davidson, president and CEO of the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce. "The current health crisis has highlighted the importance of equipping Manitoba with this type of connectivity. Access to high-speed broadband networks will be a driver of Canada's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and of future economic and social prosperity. The expansion of Bell's Wireless Home Internet service to Manitoba is welcomed and will help bridge the connectivity gap."

Added to the significant investments in wireless broadband technology, Bell MTS has been expanding its all-fibre network to meet the connectivity challenges of today and the future technology needs of tomorrow. Bell MTS is now bringing pure fibre Internet service to Churchill, Flin Flon, Morden and La Salle, which join more than 30 smaller communities in Manitoba that are connected to the world's fastest Internet technology.

To learn more about Bell MTS Wireless Home Internet service and to see if your home is now eligible, please visit BellMTS.ca/FastInternet.

Keeping up with the Magnussons: Arnes golf course gets another reboot

By Nicole Brownlee

The previously monikered Arnes Golf Course gets a second chance with the help of the Magnusson family as they prepare the course to open next spring.

Shawn and Aaron Magnusson purchased the course at the end of April and started renovations in early May, bringing their families together to revitalize the course they grew up on.

"It was definitely a family atmosphere there," said Shawn. "A nice atmosphere and a good group of people that were always around there."

"The boys grew up around the golf course," said Della, Shawn's wife. "The property really meant a lot to them … and to the community around it."

"It was a place to get together with family and friends, so they really wanted to reopen it for the community to enjoy again, and to give our children the chance to enjoy it the way they did as kids," said Della.

There are six children between the two families, all dedicated to nurturing the course, said Della.

"[Shawn and Aaron] have owned businesses in the past, and so taking on the new adventure is not anything new for them, but it was really about like doing something that we do together as a family," said Della. "Every weekend, the kids come out, so they've been helping with jobs around the course."

The first steps to the project are resurfacing the greens, cleaning up natural debris and maintaining the reseeded grass, said Della. Afterward, they'll focus more on organizing the business side of the course, like the clubhouse.

"It's your normal landscaping things that you would have to do on any properties, so we're just doing it on a very large scale," said Della with a laugh.

"It's definitely a steep learning curve, but we have lots of friends in different industries who offered their support and their advice."

Aaron Magnusson (left) and his brother say they hope the revitalized course will be a place for family and friends to gather again.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

From left: Aaron, Crystal, Lilly, bailey, Olivia, Julie, Johannes, Della and Shawn Magnusson).The Magnusson family is working hard this summer preparing the old Arnes Golf Course to open next spring.

The Magnussons have received support from the community and one of the course's original owners, Ed Luprypa.

Luprypa opened the course with his late brother Fred in 1965.

After being turned away from the Sandy Hook course on a busy tournament day, the Luprypa brothers decided their community needed a place to play closer to home.

"[The Arnes Golf Course] was a very popular course," said Luprypa. "We had people from Fisher Branch, Arborg, all over the place."

Since the Luprypas sold the course in 1998, it has changed owners several times and has sat vacant for over a decade.

"I'm glad to see it operating again. People have been asking about it," said Luprypa. "I'm wishing the boys good luck."

Luprypa added he'll be grabbing his clubs for the course's opening next year.

Cody Magnusson, a Gimli councillor and distant relative of the golf course owners, said he often played the old Arnes course with his family and friends growing up.

"We had a lot of fun," said Cody. "When we were young, a small course, affordable to play, just learning the game and everything like that, it was fantastic."

Cody heard from several community members over the years that the golf course was a central and well-appreciated part of the area where people could gather.

"I know everyone in the area is very excited to see what it's brought back to," said Cody.

Cody said he's glad to see some amenities return after seeing several local establishments close throughout the Interlake and northern communities over the years.

"It's just wonderful to see from the perspective of community spirit and community growth," said Cody. "I'm planning on spending a lot of time there."

For updates on the golf course, visit the Keeping Up With The Magnusson's Facebook page.

Folklorama back with online festivities Aug. 6-8

By Voice staff

Folklorama will be bringing the world to Manitoba in a modified format this year.

Organizers announced last week that the festival, thanks to sponsorship Manitoba Liquor Marts, will be offering three themed nights of entertainment streamed free online.

"We are thrilled to be able to deliver a unique Folklorama experience to festival goers both local and international," says executive director Teresa Cotroneo.

Folklorama Fusion will include performances from some of Manitoba's favourite ethno-cultural performers from Aug. 6-8.

Friday, Aug. 6 will feature Asia and Africa, Saturday, Aug. 7 will display the Americas, and Sunday, Aug. 8 will showcase Europe.

During each show, viewers will get to learn about each performance and the importance of keeping culture alive.

A full performer lineup is available at folklorama.ca/festival/schedule-free-access.

"Today definitely marks a moment in Folklorama's history that we will never forget," says Stan Hall, Folklorama board president.

"The idea of the Folklorama Fusion event began in the fall of 2020, when we met virtually with our pavilions," he explains. "With the reality that a festival as we have known would still not be possible in 2021, the one message that resonated was the importance of keeping the spirit of Folklorama alive and finding a way to come together safely.

"I would like to take this moment to thank all of our communities — our Folklorama family — for coming together for the better."

The festival is also launching a new virtual marketplace on its website offering treats from the various cultural pavilions. Learn more online at folklorama.ca.

Gimli Community Health Centre receives two new Vital Signs blood pressure monitors

Submitted by Interlake Eastern Health Foundation

Recently, the Interlake Eastern Health Foundation was awarded a $3,400 grant by the Westshore Community Foundation for the purchase of a Vital Signs blood pressure monitor.

The Westshore Community Foundation, Inc. is an enduring charitable organization created to support not-for-profit groups in the communities of Gimli, Riverton, Fraserwood, Winnipeg Beach and Dunnottar.

Soon after the grant was received, Oli and Marge Narfason approached the Westshore Community Foundation about donating $3,000 towards the purchase of a second Vital Signs blood pressure monitor for the Gimli Community Health Centre. The IEHF and the Narfason's partnered up to make this second purchase a reality.

Interlake Eastern Health Foundation executive director Pamela McCallum says the additional equipment will impact patients in a positive way.

"The addition of two new Vital Signs blood pressure monitors will increase efficiency when caring for multiple patients within the facility. We are honoured to partner with the Westshore Community Foundation as well as Oli and Marge Narfason on these donations which will enhance patient care at the Gimli Community Health Centre," says McCallum.

Tim Arnason, president of Westshore Community Foundation, says the mandates of the two foundations align nicely and that they will continue to partner with like minded organizations wherever possible.

"We are happy to support the Interlake Eastern Health Foundation, not only with this direct grant enabling the purchase of vital signs monitor but also in facilitating an additional $3,000 from Oli and Marge Narfason which will go towards a second monitor," says Arnason.

Clinical team manager Leanne Nickel-Brown says staff are very appreciative of the donations from the Westshore Community Foundation and the Narfasons.

"Due to COVID-19 and isolation requirements, the demands have increased and surpassed the availability to equipment, such as blood pressure machines. In receiving this new equipment, it has saved nurses time, steps and has allowed us to provide efficiency in patient care," says Nickel-Brown.

Interlake Eastern Health 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 of the Interlake Eastern Health Foundation, at 204-785-7044. For more information on the Westshore Community Foundation, please visit https://www.westshorefoundation.ca/.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Photo left to right: Gimli Health Centre nurses LeAnne Price and Brenna Raemer with one of the new monitors.

Grahamdale summer camps encourage kids to act, dance and have fun

By Nicole Brownlee

The RM of Grahamdale kicks off summer with a set of summer camps.

Children aged five to 12 can join the day camps run by 18-year-old Faith Nickel and 17-year-old Anna Osmond.

The two planned several camps, which started July 5 and run until Aug. 30, including arts and crafts, drama, dance, track and field, and more.

"The day camps that Faith and Anna have planned are geared towards keeping children active and having fun," said Devan McCoubrey, administrative assistant for the RM of Grahamdale.

"We brainstormed a lot, and even before, once we both knew we had the job, at school and stuff, we just talked about planning and what we wanted to do," said Osmond.

Nickel said she and Osmond have participated in dance and drama programs throughout their school years and are especially excited about the upcoming artistic camps.

"We have both been doing lots of different dance programs for like a big part of our life, and we have always loved sharing that with people," said Nickel.

"With COVID, we weren't able to have those classes this year, so that was definitely a camp that we wanted to like have, so we could one, dance for ourselves, and also just share something with the community that we love to take part in," said Nickel.

The two leaders hope these camps will also encourage the campers to join more clubs and programs during the school year.

"I hope that with what we're doing like with dance and acting, it encourages kids to get themselves involved in those activities because I think they're such great things for kids to take part in," said Nickel.

"It teaches us so much about being comfortable with who you are and just being OK with liking things that are not as common around where we live," added Nickel.

Held in Steep Rock and Moosehorn, participants from surrounding communities are welcome to join in the fun.

"Recreational programming for children is something that our council sees great value in funding," said McCoubrey. "We believe that our day camps will encourage participants to unplug from technology and inspire them to explore their creative side."

After more than a year spent without much socialization, Nickel and Osmond hope their camps can bring joy to their campers.

"COVID took so much away from everyone, and I just hope that these camps are a positive way for them to remember that there's still fun ways to adapt your life to the changes that COVID has brought," said Nickel, who graduated from Ashern Central School this year.

"It's nice to be able to actually get out and do some activities and kids can have fun together," said Osmond.

"The municipality is thrilled to be able to provide these day camps," said McCoubrey.

To learn more or pre-register for upcoming camps, contact edo@grahamdale.ca.

JULY 2021

SUBJECT July Day Camps (In person)

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
WEEK 1				1	2	3/4
WEEK 2	5 Art Camp Moosehorn	6 Art Camp Moosehorn	7 Art Camp Moosehorn	8 Art Camp Moosehorn	9 Art Camp Moosehorn	10/11
WEEK 3	12 Sports Camp Moosehorn	13 Sports Camp Moosehorn	14 Track and Field Moosehorn	15 Dance Moosehorn	16 Dance Moosehorn	17/18
WEEK 4	19 Sports Steeprock	20 Sports Steeprock	21 Drama Steeprock	22 Drama Steeprock	23 Drama Steeprock	24/25
WEEK 5	26 Dance Steeprock	27 Dance Steeprock	28 Track and Field Steeprock	29 Art Camp Steeprock	30 Art Camp Steeprock	31//1

Pre-register by emailing ***edo@grahamdale.ca***

PHOTO SUBMITTED

The RM of Grahamdale is holding day camps throughout July and August for children aged five to 12.

Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation is giving away $5.5 million in grants

By Sydney Lockhart

The Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation is awarding $5.5 million in grants to watershed districts across the province.

"Every year my organization is able to provide grants for environmental projects from the revenues that come out of those endowment funds," said Tim Sopuck, CEO of Manitoba Habitat. Heritage Corporation (MHHC).

The money that MHHC has to award as grants comes from endowment funds that the provincial government has set up the last three years. The Conservation Trust, the GROW Trust, and the Wetlands GROW Trust create a pool of money every year. The MHHC then gets a portion of this money and donates millions to help individuals across the province with watershed conservation efforts.

"Wildlife conservation projects are supporting land, water and wildlife projects. These projects are generally done on private land on farmland and the projects themselves have to involve farmers and landowners to a great extent," said Sopuck.

Since 2018, 119 conservation projects around the province have been completed thanks to the grant money that gives individuals and organizations the means to do them.

"It means that groups like watershed conservation districts can step up their programs and work, if you will, on a piece-by-piece basis to fully reassemble natural areas on the landscape that will help us with these bigger problems," he said.

Some of the projects that have been taken on include perennial cover, protecting riparian areas, protecting wetlands by developing run-off storage,

We know that wetlands are very vulnerable because wetlands and agriculture don't work very well together, particularly for cropping. We've lost the majority of our wetlands from drainage, so this program can provide incentives for landowners to, perhaps, conserve what's left or even bring some back that has been drained. Still, landowners might have some reasons to see them restored, reducing nutrient run-offs into rivers and much more.

"Some of the watershed groups have told me they've doubled and tripled their programs on the ground, as a result of the establishment of these trusts," said Sopuck.

The West Interlake Watershed District received $466,662 to be used in their "Working together to improve watershed health in the West Interlake Watershed project."

"This project will conserve 100 acres of wetlands and 30 acres of riparian area, enhance 85 acres of riparian areas, restore 2,000 acres of tame upland grassland, establish three kilometres of shelterbelts, establish 2,250 acres of soil health crops, erect 10 kilometres of riparian fencing and 10.4 kilometres of cross fencing and 10 alternative watering systems. Benefits also will include improved biodiversity and habitat, carbon sequestration," said their plan summary.

EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation donates money to assists land owners to help with conservation projects.

Linda Miller, manager financial administrator of the West Interlake District, said they would not do a large portion of their projects without the grants they have received from the MHHC in the past three years.

"The programs are all geared for environmental benefits, like the cover crop is to improve soil health. The perennials are for floods and erosion control. The winter waters are getting the cattle away from people's main source of drinking water, and spreading the manure out on the land rather than in piles. So, we figure that's very important," she said.

She said with the grant money, they can improve the quality of the soil and water in their district and will be able to help out another 100 landowners this year with the conservation of their property.

sports&recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Junior Blue Jays start season 1-3

By Brian Bowman

The Interlake Blue Jays had a great start to their Manitoba Junior Baseball League season with a solid 5-3 home win over the Carillon Sultans last Wednesday.

But the weekend wasn't as pleasant.

Interlake lost three road games, dropping a 14-2 decision to the three-time defending league champion Elmwood Giants on Friday before getting swept by the Altona Bisons on Sunday.

Altona won games by scores of 5-3 and 3-0.

In the victory over Carillon, Riley Young pitched 6 innings, striking out nine while allowing three earned runs.

Liam Allen came on in relief and got the final two outs.

The Blue Jays were led offensively by Kalli Einarson who had three walks and two runs scored. Interlake's other runs were scored by Ben Anderson, Chris Fines and Thomas Waldner.

Against Elmwood, Interlake had just two hits in the game that lasted just four-and-a-half innings due to the 10run mercy rule.

Jeremy Wasilewski and Danion Espanell scored for the Blue Jays.

No box scores from the doubleheader against Altona were posted on the league website at press time.

Interlake will play at the St. James A's on Friday (7 p.m.) and then will visit the Pembina Valley Orioles Sunday for a doubleheader. Games will start at 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

EXPRESS PHOTO BY LANA MEIER

Interlake Blue Jays' righthander Riley Young delivers a pitch against the Carillon Sultans. Interlake won the game 5-3.

CJHL endorses Portage in its request to host 2023 Centennial Cup

From the MJHL website

Prior to the pandemic, Portage la Prairie was scheduled to host the 2020 Centennial Cup.

With the cancellation of the 2020 event due to the pandemic, Portage requested through Hockey Canada and the CJHL the ability to have an opportunity to host a future Centennial Cup.

At this point, the MJHL supports the Portage Terriers and the City of Portage la Prairie in their request to host the 2023 Centennial Cup. Portage has also received full support of the CJHL and Hockey Manitoba on this proposal.

Over the coming months, the MJHL, CJHL and Hockey Canada will work together on finalizing a hosting plan for Portage la Prairie that, once complete, would require final endorsement of the Hockey Canada Board to be fully ratified.

"It was disappointing when the event was cancelled in the spring of 2020 due to the pandemic," said Kevin Saurette, MJHL commissioner. "The MJHL and CJHL are fully supportive of the request made to Hockey Canada to allow Portage the opportunity to host the event in 2023.

"The Province of Manitoba and the City of Portage la Prairie have proven to be an excellent host for Canada's National Junior "A" Championship, and the Portage Terriers are proven competitors and champions in previous events."

Portage is excited to host this great event.

"We are thankful for the support from the MJHL, CJHL and Hockey Manitoba and are eager to work with Hockey Canada for final approval to host this prestigious national event in the Spring of 2023," said Dale Deschouwer, co-chair Centennial Cup Host Committee.

"We have everything in place from our 2020 Centennial Cup preparations to move forward seamlessly with planning and execution of the 2023 Centennial Cup."

Peake, Kuntz win junior golf championships

Staff

Clara Peake fired a career-best 75 during the final round of the three-day Manitoba Women's Junior Golf Championship to win by 11 strokes over Crystal Zamzow at the Shilo Country Club.

Peake earlier carded identical rounds of 82 to finish at 239.

Rounding out the top five in the 11-player field were Addison Kartusch (87-83-81-252), Cala Korman (90-85-83-258) and Jeri Lafleche (90-84-84-258).

On the men's side, Breezy Bend's Braxton Kuntz carded a final round 73 to win the 99th Manitoba Men's Junior Championship in Shilo.

He earlier posted rounds of 72 and 74 to finish with a 219 total.

That was three strokes better than Elmhurst's Adam Ingram, who lives in West St. Paul and plays for the Selkirk Steelers.

Ingram carded rounds of 77, 75, and 70 to finish at 222. His 70 was the low round of the tournament.

Pine Ridge's Noah Fiks (76-77-73) and Pinawa's Ryan Blair (78-71-77) tied for third at 226.

One stroke back of the pair were Jose Mekish-Lacquette (74-80-73) and Jordan McDonald (79-73-75).

Meanwhile, McDonald and Kuntz combined to win the two-day Junior Interclub Championship at eight-under par 136.

Rossmere Country Club's Carter Johnson and Trey Ross finished four strokes back.

The teams of Ingram and Jacob Taweel of the Elmhurst Country Club and Carman Golf Club's Ryan Orchard and Samuel Sullivan tied for third place at 142.

U18 Orioles drop to 0-4

Staff

The Interlake Orioles have had a tough start to their U18 "AAA" baseball season.

Interlake is now 0-4 after a pair of road losses to the Brandon Marlins on Sunday.

Brandon won games by scores of 10-0 and 9-1.

Interlake started its season July 5 with a 12-5 road loss to the Carillon Sultans. The Orioles were then bounced 16-3 by the league-leading North Winnipeg Pirates last Thursday at Quarry Park.

Interlake visited the Elmwood Giants this past Tuesday but no score was available at press time.

The Orioles will then host Pembina Hills in a doubleheader this Sunday in Stonewall. Game times are 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Interlake's U15 "AAA" team lost its season opener 15-3 to the Winnipeg South Wolves last Wednesday in Grosse Isle.

The Orioles played road games against the Bonivital Black Sox on Monday and then the St. James A's Wednesday. Again, no scores were available.

Interlake will host St. James next Monday in Grosse Isle. First pitch is 6:30 p.m.

The U13 Orioles, meanwhile, are 0-2 after losses to the Wolves (17-3) and the A's (14-0).

Interlake had a game with St. James on Monday and Red River Valley Tuesday. The Orioles will host the Black Sox next Tuesday (6:30 p.m.) in Stonewall.

Uhl, Fanning win golf championships

From Golf Manitoba's website

Bobbi Uhl of the Shilo Country Club is the Diamond Athletic Women's Amateur Champion after outlasting Southwood Golf and Country Club's Rhonda Orr in a three-hole playoff Sunday afternoon at Niakwa Country Club.

Uhl shot an 82 in her final round, one stroke better than Orr to end three days of play at 237.

Hannah Diamond of the St. Charles Country Club had the low round Sunday shooting a six-over par 78, missing the playoff by a single stroke.

Breezy Bend Country Club's Charmaine Mackid, who finished fourth, four strokes back of Uhl and Orr, had the shot of the day acing the 14th hole. It was her second career hole-in-one.

Orr won the Mid-Amateur Division championship by one stroke over Diamond.

Meanwhile, it was a first in the storied golf career of Niakwa's Todd Fanning in winning the Diamond Athletic Men's Mid-Amateur Championship on his home course.

Fanning chipped in on the 17th hole for birdie and holed a shot from the sand for another birdie on the 18th hole to fire a one-under par 70 and finish atop of the leaderboard.

Fanning was four strokes better than Jordy Lutz of the Elmhurst Golf and Country Club.

Lutz and Ryan Sholdice of Breezy Bend Country Club each shot 76 to place second and third overall.

The low round of the day belonged to Ryan Terdik of the Pine Ridge Golf Club, he carded a two-under par 69 to finish fourth.

Fanning also won the Mid-Masters Division championship by 10 strokes over fellow Niakwa member Jay Doyle.

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MORTGAGE SALE

The building and land know as **382 Highway #9, Winnipeg Beach, Manitoba**, as described in Certificate of Title No. 2284087/1 will be sold at auction by videoconferencing and/or teleconferencing platform by a licensed Auctioneer on Wednesday, the 4th day of August, at 9:30 a.m. hosted by Gray's-Carter's Auction Service Winnipeg, Manitoba. There will be no in-person attendees at the auction, all bidders must be pre-registered by contacting the law firm/individual noted at the bottom of this ad.

To the best of the vendor's knowledge, there is situated on the mortgage property a vacant commercial space previously operated as a grocery store. Building is 3,468 sq. ft. single storey building on a slab foundation and consists of store area, small lunch room, one bathroom, parking on side 60' frontage, add on heated area at rear of building 294 sq. ft.; 800 sq. ft. warehouse area on concrete floor and 192 sq. ft. wood storage shed.

Property taxes are outstanding in the sum of $11,428.80 inclusive of outstanding 2019 and 2020 taxes, penalties to June, 2021 and 2021 property taxes; property taxes are paid in full to December 31, 2018. The property is sold subject to taxes and penalties accruing after that date. Caveat No. 86-1906/1 which will remain on title.

TERMS: Deposit of $20,000.00 in cash, certified cheque or bank draft payable to MLT Aikins LLP and the balance according to conditions to be announced at the sale.

Sale is subject to Reserve Bid which will be announced at the auction. If the highest bid does not meet the Reserve Bid then there is no sale. 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

THE GOODS AND SERVICES TAX (GST) WILL APPLY TO THIS SALE AND HAS NOT BEEN INCLUDED IN THE RESERVE BID. GST WILL BE DUE AND PAYABLE ON CLOSING UNLESS THE PURCHASER IS A GST REGISTRANT IN WHICH CASE THE PURCHASER MAY BE ENTITLED TO SELF ASSESSMENT FOR THE GST.

Due to COVID-19 and current restrictions under *The Public Health Act* all auction attendees must pre-register by calling the individual set out below at least 24 hours prior to the auction. There will be no in-person attendees at the auction.

Further information may be obtained from:

MLT AIKINS LLP
Barristers & Solicitors
30th Floor, 360 Main Street, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4G1

Attn: Jacqueline Ingrilli (204) 957-4779
jingrilli@mltaikins.com

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: **NICKLIN JAMES ROEBUCK**, late of the R.M. of Gimli, in Manitoba, Deceased.

ALL claims against the above estate, duly verified by Statutory Declaration, must be filed with the undersigned at their offices, 72A Centre Street, P.O. Box 6500, Gimli, Manitoba, R0C 1B0, on or before the 16th day of August, 2021.

DATED at Gimli, Manitoba, this 14th day of July, 2021.

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MORTGAGE SALE ADVERTISEMENT

The building and land known as 154/156 William Avenue, Riverton, Manitoba as described in Certificate of Title No. 2473662/1 will be sold at auction on Wednesday, the 11th day of August, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the auction sale will be held by way of video or teleconference. There will be no in-person attendees at the auction.

In order to participate in the auction sale, you must pre-register at least 24 hours prior to the auction by contacting Sonia at 204-957-6437 or by email at sruppel@ltglc.ca.

The Vendor is informed that 154 William Avenue, Riverton a vacant lot with a 75' frontage. 156 William Avenue, Riverton is a 1 ½ story residence of approximately 780 square feet with a full basement. The vendor does not have any further information on the property as it is owner occupied.

TERMS: Deposit of $17,500.00 by certified cheque, bank/credit union draft or solicitor's trust cheque to the address below within 24 hours of the date and time of auction and the balance in accordance with the conditions to be announced at sale.

The Property is sold subject to a RESERVE BID of $88,253.91 plus such other additional and incidental costs which may be incurred by the Lender from the 7th day of July, 2021 to the date of auction and which costs will be announced prior to the commencement of the Sale.

Property Taxes are paid to December 31, 2020

Purchaser to be responsible for payment of any outstanding water accounts owing by the Mortgagor.

Property is subject to nil.

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 and copies of Conditions of Sale may be obtained from:

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Employment opportunities galore at Interlake-Eastern RHA

By Tyler Searle

There are 48 support positions currently available across the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority (IERHA)— many boasting flexible schedules, competitive wages, benefits, and pension.

The IEHRA is pushing to fill roles in its support services department, said Keltie Kadynuik, (acting) director of support services.

Support services encompass dietary, housekeeping, and laundry services.

Staff from these departments are integral members of every healthcare team. They work behind the scenes to keep healthcare facilities running smoothly, Kadynuik said.

There are ample opportunities for cooks, assistant cooks, dietary aides, housekeeping aides, and laundry aides. Experience is an asset but not a requirement, and the IERHA is welcoming all applicants.

Staff can choose between full-time, part-time, or casual positions and these positions are unionized, so all employees enjoy competitive wages, promotion opportunities, benefits packages, and pension.

"Our pension is really nice. Even if you're casual, your hours go towards it, and your employer matches it. The life insurance premiums are also really good," said Connie Wiebe, dietary aide at Stonewall and District Health Centre.

"I like my hours right now, and I'm glad that our breaks are scheduled. There are various shifts and a lot of different positions to try. If you want to move up, they're also very open to that," Wiebe added.

The range of available positions and schedules means there is something for everybody. Because the IERHA includes dozens of facilities across the Interlake, applicants can find work close to home, Kadynuik said.

Staff are free to explore different roles within the support services department, she added.

"I'm not just doing the one job, and it's nice because I'm given the opportunity to try different things. I like it because I'm not a person to sit still, and there's always something to do," said Lisa Tate, housekeeping aide at Fisher Personal Care Home.

The opportunity to help others and work as a team are perks of the job, Tate said.

People can view availabilities and apply online at www.ierha.ca under the "Careers" tab. The website allows visitors to filter by department, facility, and position.

Only online applications are being accepted.

Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority

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- Satisfactory employment record.

Positions now available in Arborg, Beausejour, Fisher Branch, Gimli, Lac du Bonnet, Oakbank, Pine Falls, Selkirk, Stonewall, Teulon.

Housekeeping aide

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- Experience is an asset.
- Experience in health-care or institutional cleaning.
- Must demonstrate good interpersonal and communication skills.
- Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written English.
- Ability to perform mental and physical aspects of the position.
- Satisfactory employment record.

Positions now available in Arborg, Gimli, Lac du Bonnet, Oakbank, Pine Falls, Selkirk, Stonewall, Teulon.

As a condition of employment, all successful applicants will be required to provide a satisfactory criminal record check (with vulnerable sector screening), adult abuse and child abuse registry checks prior to commencing employment.

To learn more about these and other positions available, please visit ierha.ca and click on the careers tab. Search under "support services." Online applications only. Student applications welcome!

We value and support employment equity and workplace diversity and encourage all qualified individuals to apply. Accessibility accommodations are available on request for candidates taking part in all aspects of the selection process. All health-care workers are required to be immunized as a condition of employment in accordance with Interlake-Eastern RHA Policy.

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–Lisa Tate, housekeeping aide, Fisher Personal Care Home

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Rural Municipality of FISHER

NOTICE OF TENDER FOR DEMOLITION OF 18 TACHE STREET, FISHER BRANCH, MANITOBA

The Rural Municipality of Fisher invites tenders for the demolition, removal of building, concrete foundation, and adjacent concrete foundation. Property must be backfilled and topped with gravel. Prefer to not have building taken to disposal site. Tender must be completed within 1 month of award.

Submit sealed envelope marked **"Tender for Demolition 18 Tache Street"** to:
Rural Municipality of Fisher
Box 280, Fisher Branch, MB, R0C 0Z0
Email: fishercao@mymts.net

Deadline for tenders is July 30, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

For further information please call the RM of Fisher Office at (204) 372-6393

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August 1, 1927 - July 10, 2015

Six years ago Willie became his Cree given name "Flying Eagle" as he entered the gates of heaven greeted by the creator of heaven and earth. Willie, Wild Bill, Cowboy Pedro, Flying Eagle, the man of many names, who could turn a frown, grawl or smirk into laughter, love and sometimes a hug. When you have a coffee at Robin's Donuts Gimli or Chicken Chef Teulon etc. remember some of his stories and laughter. Jigging music was laughter to his feet and next thing he had you tapping the floor or jigging with him. Willie, Wild Bill is loved and missed by family, friends, and fresh air inspectors who peddle their bike around town, or cowboys who are grooming horses for the next years Rodeo, hope!

P.S. The picture shows Peguis Cap for Hockey, Pow Wows and Father's Day Picnic at the Stone Church where he is resting. The jacket is "proud recycled Rink Rat" for 20 Years in Gimli.

-Love Dorothy, wife 34 years
step family and brother Dennis

OBITUARY

Rosalind Lenore Johnson (nee Kardal)
May 20, 1956 – July 7, 2021

It is with heavy hearts and great sadness that the family of Rosalind "Lenore" Johnson announces her passing on July 7, 2021 at the age of 65 years.

Lenore was born in Gimli, Manitoba on May 20, 1956 to Frances Seymour and Allan Kardal. She spent most of her younger years in Hecla, Manitoba with her grandparents. Later moving to Riverton where she spent her teenage years. Then she met the love of her life Harvey Johnson and married him in Riverton, her husband of 46 years. Lenore and Harvey were blessed with two biological children – Caroline and Shane Johnson. Then later in life they cared for six children born from their hearts Rondell Owens, Gildon Owens, Bella Young, Davian Shupena, Olivia Shupena, and Octavia Kardal Murdoch. She always looked forward to spending summers with many nieces and nephews.

Lenore was hardworking and dedicated as a fulltime employee, mother and wife. Her resume included many lines of work such as Christie's cookie factory, Riverton Motor Inn, Promo Wear, Arborg Bakery, retiring from the Arborg Personal Care Home.

Lenore loved spending time with friends, family, and the children she cared for throughout her life. She always took time to bake her family/friends favorites. Knitting many a special pair of Icelandic woolen mitts. She looked forward to camping at Black Island visiting with extended family and friends from Hollow Water.

Lenore is survived by immediate family, sister Vivian Johnson, brother Frank (Buddy) Kardal, sister Cathy Grimolfson (Bobby). She was predeceased by her son Shane Johnson, grandparents Alex and Sarah Seymour, uncle Alex Jr (Chich) Seymour, mother Frances Seymour, father Allan Kardal, sister Geraldine Kardal, nephew Dustin Johnson.

Lenore will be always be remembered for her very warm smile, kind words, sense of humour, and extraordinary love for children.

On July 12, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. a memorial service was held at the Riverton Community Cemetery. Pallbearers were Rondell Owens, Gildon Owens, Davain Shupena, Kelvin Monkman, Grimsi Grimolfson, and Harley Johnson.

A come and go lunch followed at the Hnausa Unitarian Centre.

An enormous THANK YOU to her sister-in-laws Sharon Chartrand, Sandra Monkman, Marcel Momotiuk and best friend Vicki Olson.

Donations can be made to the Riverton Memorial Arena.
Goda Nott
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Condolences may be left on her website at www.gilbartfuneralhome.com

Gilbart Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements. Gilbart

Your memory will live forever Engraved within our hearts

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Johnson Seeds is accepting applications for the permanent full-time position of:

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Duties will consist of general accounting functions including data entry of accounts receivable and accounts payable, grower settlements, creating and updating spreadsheets, and various administrative tasks.

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Please send resume to:

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Fax: (204) 376-2201
Email: linda@johnsonseeds.com

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We thank all who apply but only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

TENDERS

The Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton invites tenders for each of the following;

Sidewalk & Curb Repair

- Removal and Construction of "Concrete" or "Asphalt" Sidewalks with concrete curbs (app. 94m)
- Removal and Construction of Concrete Curbs & Gutters (app. 179m, 21 sections)

Road Rehabilitation

- 5.00 Miles throughout the Municipality.
- Preparing, Loading and Hauling, Windrowing, Equalizing, Watering, Spreading and Packing to achieve an additional 2" of packed aggregate to the road surface.

Tender documents are available from the Municipal Offices. Sealed and clearly marked submissions will be accepted by the undersigned until 12:00 p.m. on July 28, 2021. The Municipality reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive irregularities and informalities therein, and award the tender in the best interest of the Municipality in its sole discretion.

All inquiries related to the above tenders should be directed to Jason Comeau at 204.641.2167.

OBITUARY

Barbara Frances (Renaud) Halyk

Surrounded by the love of her children, our Mom and Nanna passed peacefully at the Arborg Personal Care Home on July 5, 2021.

Mom was born in Riverton, Manitoba on June 19, 1935 to John Rundle and Lauga Renaud. She was raised in Riverton where she met Harry Halyk. They moved to Lynn Lake and later Leaf Rapids before retiring back to Riverton in 1984, where they took great pride in caring for their home and garden and all their beautiful flowers

Mom was most content when she was with her children and grandchildren. As a close-knit family there were many impromptu gatherings where we enjoyed her excellent home cooked meals.

Mom was a hardworking woman and a dedicated volunteer who was quick to offer her help to all people in their time of need. Mom worked at various jobs and met a lot of people over the years. She quickly went from acquaintance to lifelong friend. Her compassionate ways opened the door, but her quick wit and her sense of humor was what bound her friends to her for a lifetime. Thoughts of her will forever bring a chuckle in the minds of everyone who knew her. (HEY NORMAN!)

She was predeceased by her parents, her spouse Harry and was the last surviving sibling of 12.

She is survived by her sisters-in-law Sylvia Renaud and June Renaud, and her cousin and lifelong friend Margaret Wishnowski.

She leaves to cherish her memory her children Shelly (Irvin), Maureen (Gerry), Douglas (Kiko), Wanda (Chris), Barry (Cathy), Leanne, Larry (Ally) as well as her 16 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. She will also be remembered by her nieces and nephews and many cousins and friends.

Thank you to friends who have offered condolences and shared their memories. It has been heartwarming to hear of the smile she has left on the hearts of many.

"She was there for our first breath and we were there for her last" We will love you forever Momma.

Thank you to the nurses and health care aides who were kind to Mom and our sister Shelly who has always been there for our Mom.

There will be a celebration of life at a later date.

Donations can be made to the Riverton Hnausa Lutheran Church.

MACKENZIE FUNERAL HOME ARBORG
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MacKenzie FUNERAL HOME

OBITUARY

Wendy Patricia McConnell

It is with great sadness we announce that Wendy Patricia McConnell passed away in Gimli Hospital July 5, 2021 after a very brave and determined five year battle with cancer.

Wendy is survived by her beloved husband Dave; her mother Donna Wilkins of Reston; her sisters Shawna Wilkins (Rocky) of Killarney, Tanis Wilkins of Brandon; in-laws Chris and Glenda McConnell of Souris and Marla and Barry Perkins of San Francisco as well as several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her sister Kim in 2008 and her father Art Wilkins in 2018.

Wendy was born October 12, 1952. Always a good student, she graduated from Red River College as a Certified Laboratory Technologist at the young age of 18.

She married her high school sweetheart Dave in 1973.

Wendy had a varied career working in the medical field, selling real estate, and running two successful businesses that she and Dave started in Portage la Prairie. Still looking for a challenge, she attained her Certified Financial Planner designation in 2001 working with Investor's Group in Portage and Noventis Credit Union in Gimli.

Part of Wendy's charm was her friendly, caring nature taking special interest in the people she met. Her strong moral compass and steadfast integrity came naturally to her earning the respect of her peers, clients and friends.

Community involvement was always important to Wendy. She held board positions with the Portage General Hospital, the Community Foundation of Portage la Prairie and, until recently, the Gimli Yacht Club.

Other interests included world travel and of course sailing on Lake Winnipeg and in the Caribbean. "I should have been born brown, under a palm tree" was one of her favorite sayings.

Cremation has taken place.

Special thanks to the doctors and nurses of the chemo unit in the Gimli Hospital.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Cancer Care Manitoba or the St Boniface Hospital Foundation.

A celebration of Wendy's life will be held in Brandon on Friday, July 16, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. in keeping with the COVID restrictions in effect at that time.

The family invites you to view the graveside service remotely on Friday, July 16, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. from Wendy's memorial page at www.memorieschapel.com.

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OBITUARY

James (Jim) Robert Rutherford

Jim was born in Medicine Hat, Alberta and grew up surrounded by many colorful family members, apparent by the numerous stories that he shared. The one boy surrounded by many girls and women, prepared well for the family he would eventually have. As a youth, Dad lifeguarded and figure skated, among other pastimes. During high school, he was a mail-boy at the Ogilvie Flour Mill, launching his career in the grain industry. After graduating, he took a job with Ogilvies in Winnipeg, then transferred to Edmonton. With destiny's help, in 1957 Dad met our Mom, his sweetheart Shirley, who lived across the hall in the building they inhabited with 75 other single people! He was promoted into the role of grain Traffic Manager back home in Medicine Hat, and it was here that all four of us daughters were born. Transferred again to Winnipeg, our family settled in. Hard work took Dad up the corporate ladder into the position of Senior Officer for Western Canada, which held a seat on the Grain Exchange. A grain man throughout his official working years, he last worked for United Grain Growers.

Dad's value for family is deeply instilled in us. Our childhood was filled with the bounty of his creativity. He was renowned for the celebrations he organized, from special birthday parties for us, to elaborate costume parties that his wide circle of friends and extended family looked forward to. We still love looking through the photo albums he put together that document this legacy. Dad loved to camp and we explored many beautiful places. He and Mom eventually set up camp in Birds Hill Park, where he was volunteer campground host for eight years, a perfect fit for the people-person that he was. When Dad and Mom retired out to Winnipeg Beach, he quickly got involved in the community and his circle of friends continued to grow. Over the years, he volunteered for COPPS (local neighborhood patrol), Legion events, was active in the Seniors Club, played in golf, card and cribbage clubs, and was on the planning committee for the Winnipeg Beach Centennial. Dad had a big heart and reached a helping hand out to anyone in need. While in hospital recovering after surgery last year, he bought his 'roommate', who he of course befriended, a much-appreciated bus ticket home to northern Manitoba. That's just who Dad was. Dad was an avid historian. This passion led him to a long volunteer career with the Manitoba Genealogical Society (MGS) Library. He traced six of our family trees, unearthing some interesting stories, and with his research team helped people worldwide trace their roots. He dedicated countless hours archiving Winnipeg obituaries. Dad worked at MGS for 25 years, and only recently resigned his position as Chair of the Research Department due to the progression of his illness. Dad was able to stay at home in Winnipeg Beach with Mom with the help of us daughters for most of his illness. Our heartfelt thanks to the homecare nurses who assisted with his care the last few weeks. Extreme gratitude to the Gimli Community Health Centre staff, in particular the nurses who cared for him his last few days and hours. The compassion of many allowed our family to be together his final few days until the moment he passed. Special thanks to Dr. Paul and Dr. Nashed, who cared for him throughout his illness; Dad held high regard for you both.

Jim is lovingly remembered by his wife Shirley; daughters Sheryn (Glenn), Brenda, Jill (Mark), Joy (Dave); grandchildren Steve, James, Leanne, Tyson, Bailie (Ray), Quinn, Amory, Sammy; close cousins Pam (Bill), Peter (Linda) and loving extended family. He was predeceased by his parents, Archie and Jean, and sister Barbara.

The family will have a private celebration of life and continue that on a daily basis. We love you Dad, you will be greatly missed.

Donations in Jim's name can be made to Cancer Care or the MGS Library.

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

Gilbart Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.

Gilbart

OBITUARY

Marilyn Louise Schettler (nee Miller)

With heavy hearts, we announce the sudden passing of Marilyn Louise Schettler (nee Miller) on Wednesday, June 23, 2021.

Marilyn was born on May 23, 1965 in Gimli, Manitoba. Marilyn was a dedicated family-oriented individual, always looking forward to holiday gatherings and backyard bonfires. Marilyn excelled in her profession, always willing to assist and share her knowledge. Her main focus during her life was her son, Bryson.

Marilyn is survived by her mother, Jean Miller, son Bryson, brothers Daryl and Kevin, and sister Bonnie (Kenny) Seniuk and their families.

There will be a private celebration of life at a later date.

Marilyn's family would like to express gratitude for the cards, food baskets, flowers, and kind words during this time of mourning.

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Ukrainian Farmers CO-OP

DIRECTORS WANTED

Ukrainian Farmers Co-operative Ltd. invites nominations for the position of Director, to be elected by ballot in 2021.

Nominees must meet the qualifications and nominations must meet the requirements specified in the Co-op's by-laws.

Preferred Competencies

*Basic knowledge of co-ops
*Working knowledge of democratic environment
*Strategic thinking & long-term planning skills
*Ability to understand cash-flow & financial statements
*Experience in risk assessment & management
*Flexibility and independent thinking
*Comfortable in team approach to decision making and problem solving
*Time commitment
*Good interpersonal skills

Details of the Director qualifications and nomination forms are available at the Ukrainian Farmers Admin Office.

Nominations must be submitted no later than July 23rd, 2021 to:
The Nominating Committee
Ukrainian Farmers Co-operative Ltd.
P.O. Box 160 Fisher Branch, R0C 0Z0

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