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EXPRESS PHOTO BY KAREN BOWMAN

Don Hawryshko takes the plunge into the icy waters of Lake Winnipeg during Gimli's New Year's Day Polar Plunge fundraiser in support of Evergreen Basic Needs.

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Gimli council to explore options to deal with garbage, noise and private property obstruction at beach

By Patricia Barrett

A property owner whose residence fronts a strip of green space along Gimli Beach is once again raising concerns about garbage, obstruction of private property and noise during the summer season.

Long-time seasonal resident Jill Margolis Atnikov wrote to the RM and its bylaw officer with concerns about overcrowding, loud music, tents and excessive litter along the beachfront between Barney Thomas Drive and Amisk Drive.

Margolis Atnikov said she had raised concerns about the garbage and the noise, as well as other issues, with previous councils dating back to 2022 about the state of the green space, according to a letter posted under the RM's Nov. 19 agenda,

Those concerns include full-sized propane barbecues and makeshift grills left behind with hot coals and dogs being tied up and barking "constantly."

"What was once a serene family-friendly area has unfortunately transformed into an overcrowded, unsupervised campground complete with tents, BBQs, loud music and excessive litter," she wrote. "I often find myself cleaning up garbage left behind to prevent harm to my dog, who has

previously required veterinary care after ingesting waste from this area."

In addition to harming her dog and leaving her with a mess to clean up, Margolis Atnikov said beach-goers have obstructed private property — including hers — with towels, tents and canopies and have tied dogs to private fences.

Margolis Atnikov wants council to create bylaws for the green space and enforce them to restore the space for the enjoyment of residents, taxpayers and visitors.

"This green space holds deep personal significance — I learned to ride a bike there, played family soccer games and enjoyed easy access to the beach," said Margolis Atnikov. "I'd love to see it restored to a safe, clean and peaceful area for residents and respectful visitors alike."

The beach and a long lane run parallel to the back yards of homes and cottages and commercial rental buildings on First Avenue. In the summertime, the lane is heavily congested by parked cars and through traffic.

The *Express* reached out to council to ask what its plans are to tackle tents, loud music, excessive litter and obstruction of private property at the beach green space.

RM spokesperson Christine Payne



EXPRESS FILE PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

A strip of green space with picnic benches is shown along Gimli beach, looking north, along with residences backing onto to a lane where beach-goers park.

said council is aware of the issues at the beach and is looking at options to deal with them including potential updates to bylaws.

"Council recognizes these concerns and is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of bylaws, the Waterfront Development Plan, and municipal space policies to identify appropriate measures," said Payne. "This review includes looking at how municipal spaces are used and ensuring any changes reflect community

input."

Payne added that council prefers to gather input from all "stakeholders" before making any decisions about the beach.

"Council is exploring options, including potential bylaw updates, as part of its comprehensive review," said Payne. "No decisions have been made yet — we want to ensure any approach is inclusive and considers input from all waterfront stakeholders."



Evergreen Staff Spotlight Celebrating the People Who Make Our Schools Work

Meet Nathan Bostick – IT Support Technician

For the past 12 years, Nathan Bostick has been keeping Evergreen's classrooms connected and running smoothly. What began as a technical role has grown into something much more meaningful: a way to empower teachers and students through reliable, seamless technology. "Supporting education wasn't a career path I actively pursued—it found me," Nathan says. "Over time, I realized the impact I was making behind the scenes, and that sense of contribution is something I wouldn't trade for anything."

Behind the scenes, Nathan supports over 800 devices for more than 200 staff members and 1,200+ students across 10 locations. His work isn't just about fixing tech glitches—it's about safeguarding data, ensuring smooth operations, and making sure educators can focus on teaching without worrying about their tools. "When everything runs smoothly, it's easy to forget the infrastructure behind it," he explains. "That's where I come in."

Some of Nathan's most memorable moments are when his quick troubleshooting saves the day. "Getting a laptop running just before a big presentation and hearing, 'I don't know what I would've done without you'—that's when it hits me," he says. "It's not just about fixing devices. It's about enabling teachers to teach without disruption and keeping the focus on students."

What Nathan loves most about Evergreen is the people. "From day one, I've felt welcomed, supported, and truly appreciated—not just for the work I do, but for who I am."

He also wants the public to know that education is a team effort. "Every role matters," Nathan emphasizes. "From bus routes and clean schools, to working tech and classroom support, everyone is working tirelessly to create the best possible experience for students. It's not just a job—it's a shared mission."

Thank you, Nathan, for your expertise, dedication, and for being the quiet force that keeps Evergreen learning moving forward.

Interviewed by and pictured with trustee Jillian Yorga



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Spreading holiday cheer Cross-country contemplation



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Members of the Gimli District Health Auxiliary helped brighten the holidays for patients staying at Gimli Hospital by delivering flowers to hospital wards during the Christmas season. The annual tradition is meant to bring cheer and encouragement to patients who remain in hospital over the holidays. Pictured delivering the flowers on behalf of the Gimli District Health Auxiliary are Elaine Thompson, Dorothy Olafson and Patti Porosky.



PHOTO BY SHERRY BENSON-PODOLCHUK

The cross-country ski combo of Sherry Benson-Podolchuk and David Podolchuk from Gimli hit the trails in snowy Camp Morton Provincial Park on Jan. 7 when Mother Nature offered a reprieve from a polar blast. Calling it "unbelievable weather," the couple enjoyed the serenity of nature and soaked up the midday sunshine.

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Arborg council celebrates productive year, vibrant community with eye on the road ahead

By Patricia Barrett

As 2025 came to a close, the Town of Arborg's council hit pause for a moment to reflect on a number of achievements it made over the course of the year and reaffirm its commitment to improve life for ratepayers in the new year.

"This past year has been a productive one for our council and town staff, and we're proud of the progress we've made on several projects that have benefitted our residents," said Mayor Peter Dueck on behalf of Deputy Mayor Ron Johnston and councillors Donna Gislason, Ron Rogowsky and Rob Thorsteinson.

Infrastructure investments in 2025 included the paving of Crosstown Avenue between Main Street and Ingolfs Street. Dueck said the paving has "improved safety and accessibility" for drivers and pedestrians. Council also completed the construction of a new sidewalk in front of the Arborg hospital.

With the support of external grants, council also ensured residents would have accessible transportation by

purchasing a new Handi-Van.

Vibrancy and an instilling a sense of pride in the community are also important measures that council focused in 2025. And there was no better time than in the depths of a Manitoba winter to shine a little light on the town's community spaces.

"This year, we upgraded the Christmas light fixtures along Main Street and planted a new tree that will serve as the centrepiece for future community Christmas tree lighting ceremonies — a new tradition we're excited to grow in the years ahead," said Dueck.

A new year always brings renewed hope that lingering challenges will be solved.

Council has had a number of "significant challenges" simmering on its back burner, including a housing shortage and health-care system deficits — notably the ongoing permanent closure of Arborg's hospital emergency room and ambulance shortages.

"The lack of local emergency room services, ongoing ambulance shortag-



EXPRESS PHOTO COURTESY OF CINDY STANSELL

Town of Arborg council from left: councillors Ron Rogowsky, Rob Thorsteinson, Donna Gislason, Mayor Peter Dueck, Deputy Mayor Ron Johnston and chief administrative officer Cindy Stansell.



Oakley Vision Center proudly extends its deepest gratitude and congratulations to Michele Einarson on her retirement after an incredible 45 years of dedicated service.

Michele has been a cornerstone of Oakley Vision Center since the very early days, beginning her career alongside Dr. Oakley in the original office at the beach. Over more than four decades, her unwavering commitment, professionalism and compassion helped shape the high standard of care our patients have come to know and trust.

Her knowledge, work ethic and genuine care for people touched the lives of countless patients, families and colleagues. Michele's dedication played a vital role in building the practice into what it is today, and her presence will be deeply missed.

As she begins this well-earned next chapter, we celebrate an outstanding career and offer our heartfelt thanks for the lasting impact she has made on Oakley Vision Center and the Gimli community.

Thank you, Michele, for everything.

Your contributions will always be remembered, and you will forever hold a special place in our hearts.



es due to units being pulled to other regions, and the shortage of available housing continue to be top priorities for council. These are critical issues that impact residents every day, and we want our community to know we are actively working on solutions," said Dueck.

"We continue to lobby the provincial government and local health authority for the return of local emergency services and reliable ambulance coverage."

The town has made strides on the health-care front with its proactive efforts over the past several years to set up a dedicated education facility to train local people to work in health care in the rural area.

The town revamped buildings for the training centre, partnered with Ashern's Fieldstone Ventures and Manitoba colleges such as Assiniboine Community College to offer health-care aide and licensed practical nurse programs.

"We're also pleased to share that, in coordination with Shared Health, we will be hosting an Emergency Medical Responders (EMR) course in the new

year," said Dueck. "This initiative will help strengthen our community and local regions emergency response capacity and give local residents the opportunity to gain valuable training."

Like most communities in Manitoba, the town is short of available housing to meet population expansion. Available housing is also a means to attract new workers.

"On the housing front, we're meeting with potential developers and exploring ways to encourage new housing construction that meets the needs of our growing community," said the mayor.

Council wants to ensure that Arborg residents can enjoy a quality of life, and appreciates the support it has received from the community.

"Overall, council remains committed to improving quality of life for everyone in the Town of Arborg," said Dueck. "We're grateful for the ongoing support, patience and engagement of our residents as we continue working together to build a stronger, safer and more vibrant community."

"THIS PAST YEAR HAS BEEN A PRODUCTIVE ONE FOR OUR COUNCIL AND TOWN STAFF, AND WE'RE PROUD OF THE PROGRESS WE'VE MADE ON SEVERAL PROJECTS THAT HAVE BENEFITTED OUR RESIDENTS."

Avian influenza circulating in Manitoba, but human risk remains low, experts say

By E. Antonio

Avian influenza, commonly known as bird flu, continues to circulate among wild birds in Canada, but experts say the overall risk to human health remains low and caution against misguided efforts to control the virus that could harm wildlife and habitats.

Avian influenza is caused by Type A influenza viruses that occur naturally in waterfowl such as ducks and geese. While some species can carry the virus without showing symptoms, others — including raptors — experience higher rates of illness and death.

The viruses are classified as either low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) or high pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), based on how severe the disease is in domestic poultry. Most avian influenza subtypes are low pathogenic and cause little to no illness in wild or domestic birds, posing no threat to people.

More concerning are highly pathogenic strains such as H5N1, which are extremely infectious and often fatal to domestic poultry. Newer HPAI strains have also been detected in Canada in recent years, including H5N2 in British Columbia and H5N5 in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Waterfowl are considered natural reservoirs for avian influenza and can spread the virus locally or over long distances during migration, primarily through contact with the droppings of infected birds. Other bird species — and some mammals — are believed to become infected mainly through consuming infected animals.

Despite widespread circulation, experts say avian influenza has had limited population-level impacts on waterfowl so far. Human infections remain rare, and public health officials maintain that the risk to people is low, with most cases occurring among workers in poultry operations.

"There have been cases in domestic poultry operations across Canada, and those farms have suffered significant losses due to mandatory depopulation measures," officials note. In the United States, outbreaks have also been reported in dairy cattle, though those cases have so far been limited south of the border and are believed to be linked to contact with infected livestock such as poultry.

Matt Dyson, a research scientist with the Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research, says local cases make global wildlife health issues real for rural communities, showing the challenges happening close to home.

In December, avian influenza was confirmed as the cause of death for a flock of geese in Niverville. In Lockport, another group of geese was also



PHOTO BY JUSTIN FRASER/CBC

A group of geese was found dead near Lockport in recent weeks, with avian influenza suspected as the cause while test results are pending.

found dead. While test results from the Lockport birds are still pending — a process that can take several weeks — their deaths are suspected to be linked to avian influenza.

"The impacts of avian flu are not always surprising, but they are unfortunate," Dyson said. "It especially hits close to home when it's happening in your community."

Dyson explained avian influenza has not caused major declines in waterfowl populations, but scientists are actively monitoring the situation by collecting samples and running tests — work that remains in its early stages for the H5N1 strain.

"We are effectively starting from ground zero when this virus first began circulating in late 2021 and scientists are still learning from the samples they've been collecting," he said.

While researchers are still working to understand what factors contribute to avian flu outbreaks, Dyson said cases can spike during colder months, when food, water and habitat availability are reduced and birds congregate in smaller areas.

"We don't know all of this information for sure," he added. "But general wildlife ecology tells us that colder conditions can create those conditions where mortality events are more probable. When we observe really cold weather, we do see some correlation with sick birds and reduced habitat availability caused by greater ice cover."

As long as open water remains available, he added, birds are likely to stay in the area.

Autumn migration patterns may also contribute to seasonal increases in cases. Dyson said younger birds, which are "immunologically naïve," appear

more likely to contract the virus and die due to their underdeveloped immune systems, though he noted that limited studies exist to fully support that theory.

Researching avian influenza presents challenges, Dyson said, explaining that scientists cannot simply bring wildlife in for examination.

"You just can't put a call out to birds and ask them to come to the vet if they aren't feeling well," he said.

Still, advancements are being made, including work at Winnipeg's National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease and the National Microbiology Laboratory.

"It's cool to have local folks leading the charge on this research," Dyson added.

Scientists continue to band, swab, and test birds as they work to better understand avian influenza and the H5N1 strain in particular. Dyson said public reporting plays an important role in that effort.

Anyone who encounters a sick or dead bird is advised not to touch it and to report it to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative or a provincial authority. The more reports received, he said, the more data researchers can collect to track the virus.

Dyson also emphasized that while birds may die while infected with avian influenza, the virus is not always the sole cause.

"There are often multiple stressors, like malnutrition, parasites or environmental stress that, along with

avian influenza, increase the risk of death in birds," he said.

The Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative tracks confirmed cases of avian influenza on its website.

Wildlife and conservation groups warn that fear and misinformation surrounding HPAI can lead to ineffective and harmful responses. Measures such as culling wild birds, draining wetlands or opposing habitat conservation projects do not stop the spread of the virus and can have unintended ecological consequences.

Hunters are encouraged to avoid harvesting birds that appear sick and to use gloves and wash hands thoroughly if handling birds is unavoidable. Poultry producers are advised to follow strict biosecurity measures, as domestic poultry have little natural immunity to HPAI and can experience near-total mortality if infected.

While landowners with wetlands may have concerns about waterfowl, current evidence suggests waterfowl are unlikely to be a significant source of direct transmission to poultry or cattle and wetlands themselves are not thought to pose a risk.

Members of the public are advised to limit direct contact with wild birds and their droppings, keep pets away from live or dead birds, and avoid feeding waterfowl and gulls. Properly cooked poultry products and pasteurized dairy products remain safe to consume.

Experts say continued monitoring, good hygiene and evidence-based decision-making remain the most effective ways to manage avian influenza — without harming wildlife or wetlands.

"Overall, avian flu is not something someone needs to worry about on a daily basis," Dyson shared. "So, get outside and enjoy nature."

To report sick or dead birds in Manitoba, residents can contact the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative at 1-800-567-2033 or Manitoba Natural Resources and Northern Development at 1-800-782-0076. More information is also available through Ducks Unlimited Canada website at www.ducks.ca/our-work/waterfowl/avian-flu-in-canada/.

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New traffic safety rules take effect for Manitoba drivers

By Lana Meier

Manitoba drivers are facing new legal requirements on the road as changes to the Highway Traffic Act came into force Jan. 1, introducing stricter rules around snowplows, cyclists and roadside workers.

The amendments, passed under the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Traffic Safety Measures), are aimed at improving safety for highway workers and vulnerable road users, according to Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Lisa Naylor.

Under the new rules, motorists approaching or following winter maintenance vehicles with blue warning lights activated must maintain a minimum distance of 30 metres on roads with speed limits of 80 km/h or less. On roads with speed limits above 80 km/h, drivers must stay back at least 100 metres.

Drivers are also prohibited from passing snowplows if visibility ahead is obstructed or if passing could interfere with the vehicle or its work.

Police will enforce the new traffic safety measures on both urban and

rural roadways, a provincial spokesperson said. Drivers who fail to comply may face fines of \$298 and will have two demerit points assessed on their licence.

The required distances are intended to be measured from the rear of a snowplow or other winter maintenance vehicle. The spokesperson said the inclusion of specific distances in the legislation is meant to provide clear, objective guidance for both drivers and enforcement officers.

The legislation also establishes a mandatory minimum passing distance for cyclists. Drivers must now leave at least one metre of space when overtaking a cyclist, aligning Manitoba with similar rules already in place in provinces such as British Columbia and Ontario.

Additional changes affect tow truck and roadside assistance operators, who are now permitted to place cones and signage to create a safety zone while working in traffic. The measures are intended to alert drivers and help divert traffic away from active

roadside work areas.

“When winter storms hit, we know how dangerous Manitoba’s highways can be,” said Kyle Ross, president of the Manitoba Government and General Employees’ Union, in a statement. He said the changes recognize the risks faced by highway workers and provide added protection while they carry out their duties.

The province said the amendments were developed following consultations with industry representatives, law enforcement, municipalities and advocacy groups. No new speed limits were introduced as part of the changes.

Tow truck and roadside assistance operators are encouraged to review the province’s Work Zone Traffic Manual for guidance on placing signs and cones on roadways.

Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure said it will review the effectiveness of the changes through ticketing data and ongoing consultation with key groups, including law enforcement agencies.

New digital health card makes health care more accessible and convenient

By Lana Meier

The Manitoba government has launched a digital health card, allowing residents to apply for and access their health card directly on their mobile devices.

Premier Wab Kinew, Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care Minister Uzoma Asagwara, and Innovation and New Technology Minister Mike Moroz made the announcement Monday.

“Digital health cards put Manitobans in control of their own information, make it easier to access care, and support a safer, more responsive health system,” Kinew said in a statement. “Over the past year, we’ve moved from paper health cards to plastic and

now to a digital option. It is a practical step that reflects our focus on patient safety, accessibility and putting people first as we make health care better for families.”

The digital health card allows Manitobans to securely store their health card information on a smartphone and present it when receiving medical care, reducing the need to carry a physical card. Residents can choose to have a plastic card, a digital card, or both. Those with existing paper or plastic cards can request a digital version at any time.

According to the province, Manitobans who are already registered for a health card can access the digital ver-

sion immediately.

Alongside the digital health card, Manitobans can also use MediNav, the online appointment-booking system launched in 2025, to find and book appointments at participating clinics across the province. The government said the two tools together are intended to simplify access to care by allowing residents to carry their health card and book appointments from a single mobile device.

Manitobans can apply for a digital health card or learn more about eligibility and setup through Manitoba Health’s website at gov.mb.ca/health/mhsip/digitalhealthcard.html.



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West Interlake rounds out 2025 with successful gravelling, dust control and finances

By E. Antonio

The RM of West Interlake is celebrating the end of 2025 by sharing their accomplishments, challenges and goals for 2026.

Chief administrative officer Gary Campbell said the municipality takes pride in many projects completed this year, noting that a personal highlight was the ongoing gravelling and dust control work.

“In general, our grader operations in keeping our roads well graded for safe travel,” he said. “The RM of West Interlake is a great place to live, work and play which will only attract newcomers to experience the taste of the West Interlake.”

Campbell explained that the RM provides gravel, grading and dust control based off roadway assessments, which has been carried out by private contractors and municipal resources. They have also adopted the Asset Management Policy and Program which provides guidelines, assessments, conditions and up-to-date inventory lists on all municipal assets including vehicles, buildings, roads, signs, culverts and equipment.

One of the biggest challenges faced — and successfully resolved — was a series of software issues, which were addressed through system upgrades and additional staff training. Meanwhile, the Ashern Waste Disposal Grounds project has been delayed until Manitoba Hydro can provide a hydro feed. Once the RM has a response from Manitoba Hydro, they

will move ahead with the project. Currently, they are making advancements with the building requirements and providing temporary power using a generator.

Overall, Campbell described the municipality’s financial position as “healthy,” crediting the strong teamwork and relationships between municipal staff, council and community members for creating a positive working environment within the RM of West Interlake. He said the RM administration, finance committee and council collaboratively monitoring revenues and expenses, as well as discussing major purchases.

“The RM of West Interlake has a great team of professionals looking for more community engagement and volunteer effort from all ages to bolster sports and recreational activities,” he added, explaining that all volunteer efforts are vastly appreciated as the municipality looks to grow and add additional community-run programs.

Campbell noted that the municipality has continued to promote community engagement and volunteerism across its communities. He also expressed pride in the efforts of the Lakeshore Regional Wellness Commission Wellness Centre and its work toward encouraging healthier living. As a whole, memberships to the Wellness Centre continue to increase, positively promoting healthy lifestyles.

In 2025, the RM partnered on several

initiatives, which Campbell acknowledged, including the Narrows Enhancement Initiative, the IERHA Advisory Committee regarding hospital upgrades, and a collaboration with the RM of Grahamdale for the North on 6 Regional Investment Co-op — an initiative Campbell said is the first of its kind in Manitoba.

Looking ahead to 2026, Campbell said the RM of West Interlake has several projects on its radar, including the Ashern Water Distribution Assessment and the Eriksdale Force Main project.

He said several public and private enterprises have approached the RM regarding Ashern sewage and water utilities, especially due to the Ashern Hospital expansion which is putting greater demands on current utilities.

“The RM is working on gaining

knowledge of the existing water distribution service to determine what upgrades may be required to meet future demand,” Campbell added.

As for the Eriksdale force main project, the RM received funding this year from the Water Stewardship Partnership and is collaborating with them to provide a design and tender. Once documents have been prepared, the RM will have an anticipated schedule for the project.

Additional focus in 2026 is also expected on the Boundary Line Drain, which will serve as a significant flood protection asset for the Ashern area, says Campbell. “The Boundary Line Drain Committee is working with various Provincial departments to monitor, maintain and control drainage that if ignored, may contribute to overland flooding,” he said.

Manitoba lowers breast cancer screening age to 45

By Lana Meier

The Manitoba government is lowering the self-referral age for Breast-Check screening to 45, expanding access to early breast cancer detection, Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care Minister Uzoma Asagwara announced.

Manitobans aged 45 and older are able to begin booking screening appointments starting Jan. 2, 2026.

The change follows targeted investments in staff and equipment to expand screening capacity and support increased demand while maintaining quality of care, the province said. The move also responds to recommendations from advocacy groups, including Dense Breasts Canada, which earlier this year praised Manitoba for expanding access for people in their 40s.

“Earlier screening saves lives, and lowering the age to 45 will help thousands more Manitobans get care when it makes the biggest difference,” said Asagwara. “We’re investing in more staff and stronger outreach to ensure every community — rural, northern, newcomer and underserved — benefits from this change.”

To support the expansion, Cancer-Care Manitoba has recruited seven new mammography technologists, with further recruitment underway. Screening sites across the province are being upgraded with new mammography equipment, with completion targeted by the end of 2026. The agency is also on track to complete about 47,000 breast screens in 2025.

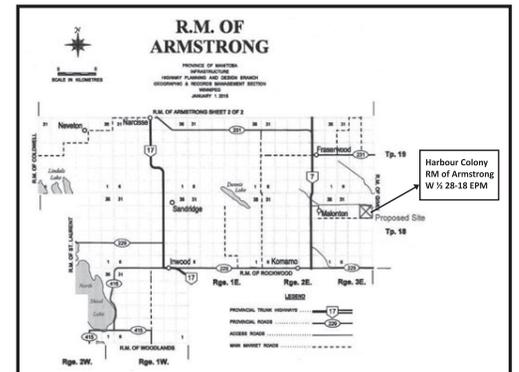
Continued on page 9

Residents of the Rural Municipality (RM) of Armstrong:

Share Your Views

concerning the proposed development of a poultry operation – Harbour Colony (TRC 12-120)

The RM of Armstrong has received a conditional use application from Harbour Colony to establish a poultry operation at W ½ 28-18-3 EPM with 60,000 broilers, 40,000 layers and 40,000 pullets (764 animal units). This application has been sent to the minister of Municipal and Northern Relations for review, pursuant to Section 112 of The Planning Act.



For more information:

Please visit http://www.gov.mb.ca/mr/livestock/public_registries.html or contact the RM of Armstrong office at Box 69, Inwood, MB, R0C 1P0.

Share your views

If you would like to share your views concerning this proposal, you are invited to contact the Manitoba government no later than **Feb. 9, 2026**. The Livestock Technical Review Committee will review submissions as it completes its assessment of the application.

You can send your submission:

- by email: TRC@gov.mb.ca
- by letter: Technical Review Co-ordination Unit
Municipal and Northern Relations
604-800 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R3G 0N4
Fax: 204-948-4042

Your submission must include your name and reference TRC 12-120.

All submissions are considered public information. They will be made available to the proponent and placed on the public registry (with identifying details removed).



PUB approves interim 4% Hydro rate increase amid drought pressures

By Lana Meier

Manitoba households and businesses will see higher electricity bills in the new year after the province's utility regulator approved an interim rate increase for Manitoba Hydro.

The Public Utilities Board has authorized a four per cent general rate increase for Manitoba Hydro, effective Jan. 1, 2026. The increase applies to all customer classes except those in Manitoba Hydro's Diesel Zone.

The approved increase is higher than the 3.5 per cent increase sought by Manitoba Hydro in its general rate application and reflects the financial impact of a severe drought affecting the utility's hydroelectric system.

According to the board, water flows into Manitoba Hydro's watershed are currently at the second-lowest level in 112 years. As a result, the utility's financial metrics have deteriorated by more than \$625 million.

In its decision, the board said an increase at the maximum legislated rate cap of four per cent is necessary to protect the long-term financial health of the Crown utility.

While the increase adds pressure for customers, some local business owners say they understand the circumstances behind the decision.

Trevor Buchanan, a farmer from Argyll and owner of Meridian Acres, said the increase represents another cost his operation will need to absorb.

"For our business, it's another cost that we will need to incur," Buchanan said. "I do see Hydro's point of view, though. I've personally seen how low the water levels actually are in our province after a recent trip to Gillam, where most of our hydro is produced."

Buchanan said multi-year lows in snowfall and rainfall have limited water replenishment across Manitoba's watersheds.

"With the multi-year low snowfall and rains, our watersheds are not being replenished to normal levels," he said.

He said his operation has already experienced power reliability issues related to supply constraints.

"We've seen first-hand what they

call brownouts, where not enough voltage is supplied," Buchanan said. "That's when electronic burnout happens — motors burn out and computer-controlled devices are fried."

To reduce risk, Buchanan said Meridian Acres has invested in alternative systems.

"We've implemented geothermal heating and installed generators in areas that require higher power requirements because Manitoba Hydro cannot provide enough electricity to maintain their function," he said.

Buchanan said solar power has been considered but was not financially feasible at the time.

"We looked at solar as a source, but the costs were too astronomical for the return," he said. "In the future, that may come in line with the investment return to

make the move toward it."

Despite acknowledging Hydro's challenges, Buchanan said higher utility costs further strain household affordability.

"With expensive housing costs, rising grocery bills and other pressures, our younger generation and people on fixed incomes take another blow to their ability to sustain themselves and raise a family in this province," he said.

The Public Utilities Board is an independent, quasi-judicial administrative tribunal with oversight and supervisory authority over public utilities and designated monopolies in Manitoba. In approving rates, the board said it must balance the financial requirements of the utility with the impact on customers.

The interim increase will remain in place until the board issues a final order on Manitoba Hydro's 2026-28 general rate application, expected later in 2026. That final decision will set a final rate for the 2025-26 fiscal year and determine rates for the remaining two years of the application period, while also addressing other issues raised during the review.

Additional details on the decision are contained in Board Order 161/25, which is available through the Public Utilities Board.

"WITH EXPENSIVE HOUSING COSTS, RISING GROCERY BILLS AND OTHER PRESSURES, OUR YOUNGER GENERATION AND PEOPLE ON FIXED INCOMES TAKE ANOTHER BLOW TO THEIR ABILITY TO SUSTAIN THEMSELVES AND RAISE A FAMILY IN THIS PROVINCE."

Community Support Service
AA Arborg Thursdays - 7:30 pm Arborg Support Centre 327 Main Street Contact 204-376-5861
AA Eriksdale Eriksdale United Church building #7 Main Street, Eriksdale (side door) Meetings are Mondays at 6:30 p.m.
AA Winnipeg Beach Lady of the Lake RC Church Corner of Hwy. 9 and Lake Ave., Winnipeg Beach Meetings are Saturdays between 7 and 8 p.m. Contact Ann J 204-389-3417
Gimli Group AA Bldg 18 Municipal Rd Industrial Park Fri & Sun Mtgs at 7:30 pm
AI-Anon Gimli and Winnipeg Beach Join us at 17B Loni Beach Road, next to New Horizon building... Gimli at 7:00 pm Wednesday evenings for an hour of support, strength, guidance and Hope. Contact 204-389-4777. All ages welcome.
AA Riverton Group 12 Main St. at the Riverton Senior Centre Mondays 7:30 p.m.

MPI flags five major fraud cases in 2025

By Lana Meier

Manitoba Public Insurance uncovered nearly \$2 million in attempted fraud through five major cases this year, part of almost \$17 million in total savings generated by the Crown insurer's Special Investigation Unit in 2025.

Manitoba Public Insurance says it investigated more than 2,600 physical damage and bodily injury claims suspected of fraud this year, highlighting the most significant cases to demonstrate the impact insurance fraud has on ratepayers.

"Insurance fraud has a cost, and that cost is borne by all of us in Manitoba," said John Bowering, MPI's vice-president and chief claims officer. He said the SIU's work protects the integrity of the public insurance system while keeping rates affordable.

Among the cases was a claimant who reported severe injuries after a minor collision and received income replacement and personal care benefits but was later observed lifting heavy weights at a gym. Benefits were terminated, saving more than

\$300,000.

In another case, a claimant injured in a truck fire claimed to have been hurt while trying to extinguish the flames. Video evidence later showed the fire had been deliberately set, with the explosion causing unplanned injuries. The claim was denied, saving about \$1 million.

MPI also cited a staged vehicle theft in which a vehicle was reported stolen only after it had already been shipped to Ontario and loaded into a container bound for Dubai. MPI is seeking to recover more than \$51,000 paid on the claim.

One of the more complex cases involved a collision with a Porsche, where investigators found the incident was intentional. MPI said the driver of another vehicle passed the Porsche owner's residence, then returned and accelerated toward the Porsche as it was backing out of the driveway, despite the Porsche attempting to take evasive action. Conflicting accounts were provided by both drivers, and evidence from the

scene did not match their statements.

Following the collision, MPI said the Porsche driver ran into the residence and returned with additional people, later reporting that the fully licensed registered owner had been driving with passengers. Investigators determined the registered owner was not in the vehicle and that a lone driver with a learner's licence was operating the Porsche illegally. It was also discovered the parties involved knew one another. The claim was denied, saving ratepayers approximately \$154,000.

Another claimant who reported being unable to work due to pain was later observed lifting and transporting large quantities of beer and equipment without assistance. Benefits were terminated, saving more than \$480,000, with MPI attempting to recover additional funds already paid.

MPI is encouraging the public to report suspected insurance fraud through its TIPS line or anonymously through Crime Stoppers.

Town of Winnipeg Beach marks passing of councillor, not holding byelection

By Patricia Barrett

The Town of Winnipeg Beach marked the passing of Coun. Larry Kisiloski a week before Christmas and paid tribute to his contributions to the municipality.

The town issued a press release on Dec. 19 announcing Kisiloski's passing the day before and lowering the town office flag to half-mast. Kisiloski will be "profoundly missed" by remaining councillors, town staff and community partners.

"Since being elected to Council on October 19, 2022, Larry served with integrity, thoughtfulness, and an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of those he represented," said the statement. "His contributions to council were marked by a keen intellect, clarity of thought, and a genuine desire to see our community thrive."

Kisiloski sat on numerous committees and boards including the East Interlake Handi-Van, the Winnipeg Beach Legion, Evergreen Basic Needs and the Interlake Tourism Association.

The formerly five-member council has only three members at present: Mayor Stan Potter, Deputy Mayor and Coun. Barry Hoel and Coun. Doug Jarvis.

Former deputy mayor and councillor Jean Gendron resigned last August. Former mayor Pamela Jackson resigned in September 2024 and a byelection was held for a new mayor.

Town of Winnipeg Beach chief administrative officer Jodi Mitchell said council was very saddened by Kisiloski's passing and "our condolences remain with his family and loved ones."

Although the town now has a three-member council, she said it can still conduct business as it meets a "minimum quorum of three members regardless of vacancies" under Manitoba's Municipal Act. A quorum is required for council meetings.

"The duly elected council of the Town of Winnipeg Beach continues to govern the Town of Winnipeg Beach. With quorum met, council retains full authority to conduct meetings and make decisions," said Mitchell.

With regard to byelections being held to replace the two vacant council seats, Mitchell said council has decided to not hold any.

"Former councillor Jean Gendron submitted her resignation on Aug. 14, 2025. Council formally acknowledged the resignation (Resolution No. 2025/361) and decided not to proceed with a byelection (Resolution No. 2025/362) at the Aug. 27, 2025, meeting," said Mitchell. "As for the late councillor Kisiloski's seat, the next general election will be held in July 2026. The Municipal Act states that a byelection is not required if the vacancy occurs in the six months before the next general election. Therefore, no byelection will be held."

A spokesperson for the provincial department of Municipal and Northern Relations said that because the two vacancies on council occurred within six to 12 months before the next general election, council had the option to move forward with byelections or not.

If the town experiences the loss of another council member, quorum would be lost and the provincial government could step in and appoint an admin-



TOWN OF WINNIPEG BEACH
Coun. Larry Kisiloski, who was elected in 2022, passed away on Dec. 18, 2025. The Town of Winnipeg Beach currently has three members of council after Jean Gendron resigned last summer.

istrator.

"Council still meets quorum with three members and can continue municipal business," said the spokesperson. "If another vacancy is experienced, then quorum is lost and Manitoba could appoint an administrator."

> CANCER SCREENING, FROM PG. 7

CancerCare Manitoba has added a dedicated outreach position focused on increasing access to screening, including engagement with more than 30 First Nations communities and partnerships with newcomer, Indigenous and racialized community organizations to reduce travel and access barriers.

"We are very encouraged by the Manitoba government's support for CancerCare Manitoba's commitment to cancer screening," said Dr. Donna Turner, vice-president and chief of population oncology. "By investing in people and infrastructure, we can reach more individuals where they live and reduce barriers to screening,

especially in rural, remote, northern and equity-deserving communities."

The minister said lowering the screening age to 45 is a milestone in a multi-year plan, with work underway to further expand eligibility to age 40 by the end of 2026.

"Breast Screening Advocates Manitoba welcomes the government's decision to lower the breast cancer screening age to 45," said Jennifer Borgfjord. "Expanding access to screening in the 40s will help detect cancers earlier and save lives."

Information on screening locations is available at cancercare.mb.ca/screening. Appointments can be booked by calling 1-855-952-4325.

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get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



Pumpkin Soup

Cook time: 10 minutes
 Servings: 4
 1 can (15 ounces) Green Giant 100% Pure Pumpkin
 1/2 cup coconut cream
 1 cup vegetable stock
 1 tablespoon garlic paste or 1 teaspoon garlic powder
 1 tablespoon ginger paste or 1 teaspoon ground ginger
 salt, to taste
 pepper, to taste
 coconut rice, for serving (optional)

bread, for serving (optional)
 In saucepan over medium heat, combine pumpkin, coconut cream, vegetable stock, garlic, ginger and salt and pepper, to taste. Stir until well incorporated, cook 10 minutes.
 Serve over coconut rice or with bread, if desired.
 Notes: For an elegant garnish, top with toasted pepitas, pumpkin seeds or swirl of coconut milk.
 Leftovers can be refrigerated up to 3 days or frozen up to 3 months. Thaw frozen coconut ginger pumpkin soup in fridge then reheat in microwave or saucepan on stovetop.



Shrimp Spaghetti

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"
 Servings: 4-6
 1 pound spaghetti noodles
 2 tablespoons butter
 1/4 cup avocado oil
 1 package (12 ounces) raw shrimp
 2 tablespoons garlic powder, divided
 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
 1 cup chicken broth
 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
 1/4 cup heavy cream
 1 teaspoon onion powder

1 cup frozen or fresh spinach
 bread, for serving
 Cook spaghetti noodles according to package instructions.
 In skillet over medium heat, add butter, avocado oil and shrimp. Mix in 1 tablespoon garlic powder and paprika. Remove shrimp after they begin to turn pink; set aside.
 Add chicken broth, Parmesan, heavy cream, remaining garlic powder, onion powder and spinach to skillet; mix well. Add shrimp back to skillet to finish cooking. Mix in noodles and serve with bread.



Easy Lemon Blueberry Bars

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"
 1 stick butter, melted
 1 box lemon cake mix
 2 eggs
 1/3 cup fresh blueberries
 2/3 cup white chocolate chips, divided
 1/3 cup chopped pecans

Heat oven to 350 F.
 In bowl, combine butter, cake mix, eggs, blueberries, 1/3 cup white chocolate chips and pecans.
 Butter 7-by-11-inch pan and spread mixture evenly into pan. Bake 30-35 minutes.
 Let cool then melt remaining white chocolate chips and drizzle over bars.
 Tip: If melted white chocolate chips are too thick, add a little oil before drizzling.

Ask the Money Lady

Dear Money Lady Readers: Today my husband read me my horoscope for 2026, and he says it sounds like me. Have you read yours too? Most of us want to make changes in a New Year to ditch the old habits, stop smoking, lose weight, find a new job, the list could be endless. So, is this the year you change the narrative of your life? Often times the new story to a new life is right in front of you, but for whatever reason we can't see it, can't feel it, and certainly can't imagine making the necessary changes. However, we all know that having the courage to change the course of your future, will always bring you new opportunities. A healthier life, less pain, a new career, more money, more love; it's all out there for those who want a different story. Of course, this all sounds great, but making a change and keeping up the fight is always easier said than done. Sure, we all plan to make changes every January, with 58% of us starting a "New Year's Resolution" every year. But of those that plan for change, 87% will give up and settle back into their old ways by the end of February.

Here's a quote I want to share with you from an Italian poet Dante Alighieri, (1265-1321): "The path to paradise begins in hell." Isn't that the truth. If things were easy, we would all be thin, fit, wealthy and always happy. The fact is, only 1% of Canadians will make their resolution last more than 10 months. Change is tough. Too often we tend to revel in our sad and pitiful life stories, getting an emotional charge out of how unfair life is to us, and how great we are for keeping up the struggle – against all odds. We whine and complain to people about being a survivor and love it when we get comforted: "You poor thing, how do you ever manage?" We have to manage, because we don't make any changes to improve things.
 Now I am not saying we shouldn't have our pity-parties once in a while. Often times this is exactly what we



need – I just don't want you to keep the party going forever, especially into another year of unhappiness. Remember, the greatest gift we have is the one we often forget: we have a choice. You can always choose a different direction in life. If you believe in the theory of cause and effect, then everything in your past has brought you to this very moment so you can choose another direction. Stop listening to the naysayers and get on with it. Stop wanting sympathy for your sad situation and move past it. And for all you helicopter parents out there, stop smothering your adult children, and let them go. We all need to discover our true self, our destiny and our calling.

Decide on a new story this year. What choices will you make that will change your experiences and bring you closer to the life you want to live. Remember, if you do what you always did, you will get what you always got. Negative feelings create negative attitudes and attract negative people. But, when you decide to make a change, being positive creates feelings of happiness, attracting other happy people with opportunities and connections, to help you advance your new story.

Good Luck and Best Wishes,
 Money Lady
 Written by Christine Ibbotson, Author, Finance Writer and Syndicated Money Coach on BNN Bloomberg. Christine is also part of the everyday lineup on CTV Your Morning in every province. No AI. Follow Christine on Instagram @askthemoneylady, or on Facebook (Christine Ibbotson).



Apple Spice Cake

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"
 2 apples
 3 tablespoons brown sugar
 1 tablespoon cinnamon
 1 tablespoon flour (optional)
 1 box spice cake mix
 1 stick butter, melted
 4 eggs
 1 cup milk
 Glaze:
 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
 2-3 tablespoons milk

1 cup chopped pecans
 Heat oven to 350 F.
 Peel, core and chop apples into bite-sized pieces. In bowl, mix apples with brown sugar, cinnamon and flour, if desired, which helps keep apples from sinking to bottom. Set aside.
 In large mixing bowl, mix spice cake mix, butter, eggs and milk. Mix in apples and pour into 9-by-13-inch pan. Bake 30-35 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.
 Let cool.
 To make glaze: Mix powdered sugar and milk; pour over cooled cake.
 Top with pecans.

Gimli rings in new year with first Polar Plunge for charity

By Lana Meier

A small but determined group of cold-water volunteers helped ring in the new year in Gimli with a splash — literally — during the community's first Polar Plunge fundraiser on New Year's Day.

Organized by Don Hawryshko, the event saw five participants take turns plunging into the icy waters of Lake Winnipeg to raise money for Evergreen Basic Needs (EBN), the local food bank. While modest in size, the fundraiser drew attention both on site and online and is already being eyed as a potential annual event.

Hawryshko said the idea grew from a personal desire to volunteer locally and support a cause he sees as increasingly important.

"I've never really volunteered before, but I see the need for the food bank over and over again," he said. "I live half a block away and stop in frequently. There really is a need, and I wanted to pick something that mattered."

After searching online for Polar Plunge events elsewhere, Hawryshko decided to organize one himself in Gimli, choosing Lake Winnipeg to keep the experience authentic.

"I wanted to jump in the lake and do it the way you should do it — an authentic polar plunge," he said. "I've seen some where people dump buckets of water in a parking lot and they raise money, but this is different. You see the frozen lake; you see the hole cut in the ice. That was my vision."

The plunge took place on the frozen lake surface, where Hawryshko carefully cut and secured a hole measur-

ing roughly seven feet by four feet. Ice thickness was measured at about 16 inches, with a sandy bottom and water depth of approximately three-and-a-half to four feet.

Safety, Hawryshko said, was his biggest concern.

"There's a lot of anxiety when you do something like this," he said. "People don't always think about the risks — frostbite, hypothermia. I took a lot of precautions."

Participants entered one at a time from the edge of the hole and remained in control throughout, Hawryshko said, either dunking fully or climbing immediately back out using a ladder. An emergency room nurse and a firefighter were also on site, and participants signed waivers to limit liability.

"I didn't want anyone jumping into water over their head or slipping under the ice," he said. "Everyone sat on the edge, went in under control, then climbed out."

Hawryshko admitted he expected the event might be a solo effort.

"I'm horrible at promoting stuff," he said with a laugh. "I put it on Facebook and Meanwhile in Gimli, talked to a few people, but I honestly thought it was going to be just me. I figured even if it brought in a few bucks for the food bank, it would be worth it."

Instead, friends, family members and onlookers gathered at the lakeshore, cheering on each participant. Two young girls who took part surprised Hawryshko when the water reached their necks, though he said

Continued on page 14



Randy Gunnink



Kennedy Gunnink plunges into the icy waters of Lake Winnipeg.



The Gunnink family of Dugald made the trip to Gimli specifically for the Polar Plunge fundraiser. Pictured left to right are Randy Gunnink, Kennedy Gunnink, Nathan, Paige Gunnink and organizer Don Hawryshko.



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Don Hawryshko takes the plunge into the icy waters of Lake Winnipeg during Gimli's New Year's Day Polar Plunge fundraiser in support of Evergreen Basic Needs.

Federal dredging prep underway at Boundary Creek

By Lana Meier

Preparatory work for a federally funded harbour dredging project is underway at Boundary Creek in Winnipeg Beach, with contractors reinforcing ice conditions to support heavy equipment required for the work.

According to information shared publicly, crews are flooding the mouth of Boundary Creek to thicken the ice so it can support a long-boom excavator. Snow has been cleared from the ice surface to allow flooding of approximately two inches per day, with the goal of reaching ice thickness between 38 and 42 inches.

The work is being carried out at the Winnipeg Beach Small Craft Harbour, a federal property owned and managed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

In an emailed response, Carol Launderville, communications advisor for Fisheries and Oceans Canada in the Ontario and Prairie Region, said the project involves maintenance dredging of the harbour's entrance channel, with an estimated total dredge volume of approximately 1,210 cubic metres of material over a total area of about 1,321 square metres.

Launderville said winter dredging was selected to minimize disruption to harbour users by avoiding the busy open-water and commercial navigation season.

Temporary sediment control measures are also being installed beneath the ice along the mouth and south side of the channel. Launderville said the project includes the use of a turbidity curtain



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Maintenance dredging is underway at the mouth of Boundary Creek in Winnipeg Beach, where winter ice conditions are being used to support heavy equipment at the federally owned small craft harbour.

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to help contain sediment within the work area, in accordance with mitigation strategies and best management practices guided by DFO's Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program.

Public discussion around the project intensified after residents noted that only a 10-foot-wide channel from the end of the breakwater partway toward the marina is scheduled to be dredged. Launderville said this section represents only a portion of the overall project and is intended to widen the existing entrance channel.

Some residents have questioned whether the narrow channel will provide a lasting solution, suggesting currents, wave action and fluctuating lake levels could result in the channel silting in again within a few years.

Launderville said maintenance dredging at the Winnipeg Beach harbour typically occurs on a three- to five-year cycle, noting that in recent years low water levels combined with high winds on Lake Winnipeg have

contributed to increased sedimentation in the entrance channel. The current work, she said, is part of an ongoing maintenance strategy rather than a one-time or permanent fix.

Town officials have emphasized that the municipality has no role in the project. In a statement, chief administrative officer Jodi Mitchell said the Town of Winnipeg Beach is not involved in planning, funding or supervising the Boundary Creek dredging work and has not been consulted on the project's scope or schedule.

"Any activities in the lake fall under federal authority," Mitchell said, adding that no municipal ratepayer funds are being allocated to the project. She also said council and the municipal office have not received any concerns or questions from residents regarding the dredging to date.

Details on the project cost are publicly available through the federal CanadaBuys procurement website.

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Snowmobilers encouraged to ride responsibly on Manitoba trails

By Lana Meier

Snowmobilers across Manitoba are being welcomed back onto the trails this winter, with a strong reminder from safety partners to ride responsibly and take precautions to ensure everyone gets home safely.

The Manitoba RCMP, Manitoba Public Insurance and Snowmobilers of Manitoba are issuing the reminder ahead of International Snowmobile Safety Week, which begins Saturday.

“Winter is a wonderful time of year for snowmobilers to hit the trails and enjoy the season, but we strongly urge everyone to ride safely,” said RCMP Staff Sgt. Matt Lavallee, who teaches snowmobile safety courses to RCMP members. “Snowmobilers need to ride in a responsible manner so that everyone returns home at the end of the ride.”

Lavallee said Manitoba law requires all riders to wear an approved snowmobile helmet while operating a machine, and riders under the age of 14 must be under adult supervision. RCMP officers patrol trails throughout the province and will enforce snowmobile laws as needed.

Over the past six years, 28 snowmobile-related deaths have occurred in Manitoba, including four in 2025. Speed was a contributing factor in many of those fatalities, along with

alcohol impairment, improper or no helmet use, driver inexperience and careless driving.

“January and February have the highest fatality rates among snowmobilers in Manitoba, so it is very important to continue to have conversations to educate riders about snowmobile safety,” said Maria Campos, vice-president and chief customer and product officer for MPI. “Snowmobiling is a fantastic way to enjoy Manitoban winters, and by slowing down, wearing a helmet and riding sober, we can keep it fun and safe.”

Officials say safety starts before riders even leave home. Snowmobilers are encouraged to check their machines for mechanical issues, including brakes, lights, fuel levels and engine performance. Carrying a fully charged cellphone, first-aid kit and basic repair tools — such as a spare belt, pull cord and spark plugs — is also recommended. Riders should plan routes in advance, share travel details with someone at home and dress appropriately in warm, layered clothing with a properly fitted helmet.

Once on the trail, riders are reminded to maintain safe speeds, stay alert and courteous, watch for hidden hazards beneath the snow, cross roads and highways only where permit-



EXPRESS PHOTO BY LANA MEIER

A South Interlake Snoriders trail groomer prepares snowmobile trails for the winter season, helping ensure smoother, safer riding conditions for snowmobilers across the region as riders are reminded to follow posted signage and ride responsibly.

ted, and never operate a snowmobile while impaired.

“The safety of riders is of utmost importance to our organization,” said Joe Thievin, a vice-president with Snoman. “Riders need to drive to their level of ability, avoid alcohol or drugs, and take all necessary precautions so they can ride again.”

MPI collects a \$25 non-refundable annual fee on all off-road vehicle registrations to support trail main-

tenance and development, safety education and training programs, and rehabilitation of public lands affected by off-road vehicle use. Riders are also encouraged to purchase a Snopass, which provides access to approximately 13,000 kilometres of designated provincial trails and helps fund trail grooming and maintenance that contribute to safer riding conditions.

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Pets Need Christmas Too organizer raises significant amount of food for GHS

By Patricia Barrett

Looking out for our furry friends at Christmas is top of mind for a Gimli resident who organized her annual Pets Need Christmas Too food drive for the Gimli Humane Society.

Karen Bittner's popular fundraiser benefits the no-kill shelter each year as it tries to find homes for cats and dogs in its care.

Gimli residents once again opened their hearts and their pantries this year, supplying a trailer-load worth of dry and canned dog and cat food, treats and kitty litter.

Bittner thanked residents for their "extraordinary thoughtfulness" to provide shelter animals with much-needed support.

"The Pets Need Christmas Too fundraiser has yielded outstanding results," said Bittner on Dec. 27 when the supplies were collected and taken to the humane society. "Today, [animal control officers] Cindy [Salamandyk] and Brian [Derby] from the Gimli Humane Society retrieved the impressive array of donations at Robin's Donuts."

Bittner organizes the fundraiser each year in honour of her late mother's philanthropy.

"I am profoundly grateful that my late mother's philanthropic efforts continue to benefit pets in need, a tes-



Karen Bittner with Gimli Robin's Donuts owner Lakshay Gulati, who donated free space in his coffee shop where people could drop off pet food.

tament to her enduring legacy," said Bittner. "The Pets Need Christmas Too fundraiser enables me to honour her memory while advocating for the welfare of pets, who undoubtedly deserve a loving home."

Bittner thanked Lakshay Gulati, who owns the Gimli Robin's Donuts, for donating collection space. He set up a large Christmas tree in the coffee shop where residents could drop in and drop off pet food donations.



EXPRESS PHOTOS COURTESY OF KAREN BITTNER

Gimli and area residents donated a trailer-load of cat and dog food, treats and toys.

He offered "remarkable cooperation and eagerness" to support the charitable cause and is looking forward

to supporting the fundraiser in 2026, said Bittner.

> PLUNGE, FROM PG. 11

everyone handled the cold well.

"I had their dad go first," he said. "Everyone went individually, and everyone was able to manage it."

Despite his nerves beforehand, Hawryshko said the experience

turned out to be more rewarding than he expected.

"After I went in and warmed up, it was just entertaining," he said. "Watching other people, seeing the excitement — it was fun. I got so much more out of it than I anticipated."

Evergreen Basic Needs executive director Karen Bowman said the fundraiser was especially meaningful as demand for services continues to rise.

"The support from Gimli's Polar Plunge is very special to us," Bowman said. "It means people recognize

and value the work we do, and that when they think of a new event, they think of us as a worthy cause."

Bowman said the funds raised covered the cost of one complete Christmas Hamper or 10 new toys for the organization's Toy Shopping Day.

"With our numbers increasing significantly this year, every donation that helps mitigate that cost is very much appreciated," she said.

Hawryshko chose Jan. 1 as the event date to symbolize a fresh start.

"It's the beginning of a new year," he said. "It's opening the door to something new, and EBN needs help to kick off the year."

With interest already building, Hawryshko said he would like to see the Polar Plunge return in 2027, potentially with more participants and an even larger hole in the ice.

"It's a learning curve," he said. "Now I know what it feels like. Next year I'd encourage people differently, maybe cut a bigger hole, and hopefully get more people involved."

Bowman said Evergreen Basic Needs would support the effort again if it returns.

"If Don decides to do it again next year, EBN will be there to help in whatever way we can," she said.

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Party before the storm: Gimli coffee group shares friendship and support

By Patricia Barrett

What do you do before the first big blizzard of the 2025 winter season roars into the Interlake? You head over to Gimli Robin's Donuts, grab a steaming cup of coffee, join in whatever conversation is underway, enjoy some snacks and share the love.

Gimli resident Karen Bittner has been organizing a "coffee group Christmas party" each year but cancelled it after considering hazardous road conditions and the approaching blizzard.

The blizzard — which started late in the day on Dec. 17 and grew in ferocity overnight — brought a mix of freezing rain, snow, blowing snow and high winds. A number of Interlake highways including 7, 8, 9, 17 and 68 were either party covered with snow, completely covered or closed before dawn the following morning.

Undeterred, members of the coffee group "braved the storm" and came out on Dec. 17 to celebrate. They greatly appreciated the coffee shop's owner, Lakshay Gulati, accommodating their party.

"A number of our Robin's Donuts coffee group members still attended our Christmas party which highlighted our appreciation for the business and the local community that supports us," said Bittner in a text message. "Lakshay Gulati, the new owner of Gimli Robins, has demonstrated



EXPRESS PHOTOS COURTESY OF KAREN BITTNER

Different groups of people popped in to their coffee group's annual Christmas celebration on Dec. 17 at Robin's Donuts in Gimli despite the onslaught of Manitoba's first blizzard that day.

exceptional kindness and flexibility towards his customers. He graciously allowed us to proceed with our coffee group Christmas party — an annual tradition spanning four years — which serves as a gathering for individuals who may be alone or unable to afford holiday meals."

The coffee group stemmed from a "shared realization" about spending holidays without local family ties, she said. Given their connection at Robin's, the idea to hold a Christmas party was fitting. People from all walks of life drop in. Attendance varies depending on how busy people are — but the "camaraderie remains strong."

"Our holiday gatherings are built on the principles of togetherness and support, welcoming anyone no matter what [their] views, concerns or life

experiences. We've made it a point to invite the solitary and emphasize that everyone comes as they are," said Bittner. "For four years, Robin's Do-

nuts in Gimli has supported our gatherings, and we're thankful for their provision of coffee and other necessities."

Gimli RCMP respond to well-being check, find home destroyed by fire

By Lana Meier

Gimli RCMP responded to a request to check on the well-being of an individual at a rural residence near Narcisse in the RM of Armstrong on Dec. 24, 2025, at about 10 a.m.

Police arrived to find the residence had been completely destroyed by fire. A neighbour reported a 69-year-old man lived alone in the home.

Human remains were later located

in the rubble and are believed to be those of the resident.

Police say the fire is not believed to be suspicious at this time. The investigation continues.

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Santa breakfast draws big crowd in Matlock



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Families turned out in large numbers for the Matlock Recreation Club's annual Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, with more than 400 people attending the community event. Children enjoyed visiting with Santa Claus, sharing holiday cheer and taking part in festive activities throughout the morning.



Riverton hosts successful spay and neuter clinic

By E. Antonio

The RM of Bifrost–Riverton held its inaugural free spay and neuter clinic for cats on Jan. 3.

Municipal residents and their cats lined up outside the Riverton Community Hall by 8 a.m., filling the first-come, first-served appointments within two hours. Organizer Crystals Halpin said she couldn't have asked for a better turnout.

"It was awesome," said Halpin. "We were able to fill all 30 spots, and those cats were spayed or neutered for free. The day went extremely well."

Halpin brought the idea forward to Bifrost–Riverton council in October after she and her daughter found a lost kitten. Aware of the growing number of stray cats in the municipality, she wanted to find a proactive solution to help manage the population.

Approximately 10 stray cats were brought to the clinic, with the remaining spots filled by cats from local households. The clinic ran as a full-day event, with Halpin and her four daughters — aged 9, 12, 13 and 19 — arriving at 7:30 a.m. and staying

until 5:30 p.m. to help with setup and takedown.

Veterinarian Dr. Peter Iskander of Bark and Meow Mobile Veterinary Clinic, along with two veterinary technologists, performed the surgeries and vaccinations. Halpin said she was grateful for their support and proud to show her daughters that meaningful change can happen through dedication and hard work.

"My daughters were totally on top of it all day," she said.

The clinic was funded by the RM, with donations collected to support ongoing and future clinics. Halpin said the event was well received, with many residents asking how they could donate and cat owners expressing gratitude for having access to the service locally.

While future plans have not yet been finalized, Halpin said she hopes additional clinics will be held.

"Thank you so much to everyone who has supported this project so far," she said. "Myself — and the cats — appreciate it so much."



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Thirty cats were spayed or neutered during Riverton's inaugural free spay and neuter clinic held Jan. 3 at the Riverton Community Hall.

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FLOOR TWO

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Kodiaks drop lone game, remain near bottom

By Annaliese Meier

The Lundar Kodiaks dropped their lone game of the week and remain near the bottom of the Winnipeg High School Hockey League Price Division standings.

Lundar was in action Thursday, Jan. 8, falling 8-1 on the road to Warren Wildcats. The Kodiaks' lone goal came late in the first period when Kolten Bell-Sinclair scored on the power play at 5:41, converting a feed from Noah Kuzyk to briefly get Lundar on the board.

Through 13 games, Lundar sits 11th in the Price Division with a 2-11 record.

The Kodiaks return to action this week with a pair of games, travelling to Edward Schreyer on Thursday, Jan. 15 for a 3:35 p.m. puck drop before returning home Friday, Jan. 16 to host Linden Christian at 6 p.m.



EXPRESS PHOTO BY JO-ANNE PROCTER

Lundar Kodiak goaltender Mason Bauch made 35 saves in his team's 8-1 loss to Warren Wildcats in WSHL action in Warren on Jan. 8. The Kodiaks are playing their first season in the league in the Price Division.

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INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Leadership and experience paying off for Vigfusson, Nighthawks

By Kieran Reimer

Adam Vigfusson is in for an exciting couple of months with the Niverville Nighthawks.

It has already been a strong junior career with the Nighthawks for the 20-year-old from Gimli. The 2025-26 Manitoba Junior Hockey League season, however, is his final year of league eligibility as Niverville's captain.

He has made the most of it so far, helping lead the Nighthawks to the top of the league with a 27-2-1 record at the Christmas break.

The team is also ranked second in the Canadian Junior Hockey League as of Dec. 22.

"We're an older group. There's a lot of veterans on the team, a lot of guys who have played a lot of junior hockey," said Vigfusson. "Our goalies have been spectacular — they've been rock-solid all year long. Just how tight we are as a group is something I've never really been a part of. Our group is so tight this year, and we know that we're special and that we can do something great."

Vigfusson and the Nighthawks have the second-most goals for (136) and the fewest against (57), good for a plus-79 goal differential.

The top line of Vigfusson, Merik Boles and Hayden Wheddon has been a major contributor to that differential, combining for 47 of those goals so far.

Vigfusson is also trending toward a new career high in points after post-

ing a team-high 62 in 2024-25. He sits at 19 goals and 24 assists for 43 points in 29 games this season.

Both Boles and Wheddon are also enjoying career seasons.

"I've played with Merik pretty much my entire junior career, and I've known Hayden since he was about five years old, growing up," said Vigfusson. "There's a lot of existing chemistry there. They're both spectacular players. Merik's probably one of the most trustworthy people to play with in the defensive zone, and then he can go up and create on offence. It's really nice knowing you have that defensive player who still puts up really, really good numbers."

The trio will look to keep the offence going in their final 28 games of the 2025-26 regular season.

The Nighthawks are also chasing the first Turnbull Cup championship in franchise history.

Vigfusson believes the team has the ability to do so, crediting the locker-room culture for instilling that confidence.

He said the group follows an "A.C.E." mentality — accountability, care and empathy.

"That kind of culture in the locker room really brings the team together," he said. "We care for each other, we take accountability and we show empathy. If a guy is down, you come together as a group to bring him back up, and there's nothing but positivity in that locker room. It really starts with the people we're with. The team



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Niverville Nighthawks captain Adam Vigfusson hopes to lead his team to a Centennial Cup title this spring. The 20-year-old from Gimli is tracking toward career numbers this season, posting 19 goals and 24 assists through 29 games.

chemistry has been unreal so far."

Vigfusson hopes to continue his hockey career at the post-secondary level once his junior eligibility expires.

His skill set and leadership are assets that could be valuable to any college program.

In the meantime, he said his focus is on helping Niverville capture not only an MJHL title, but a national championship at the 2026 Centennial Cup.

It would be quite the junior finale for the former Interlake Lightning forward.

Falcons battle but fall in pair of CRJHL losses

By Lana Meier

The Lundar Falcons endured a difficult two-game stretch at home last weekend, dropping CRJHL decisions to the Beausejour Comets and the Selkirk Fishermen.

Lundar fell 6-4 to Beausejour on Jan. 9 at the Sun Gro Centre despite a spirited third-period push. The Comets built a 3-0 first-period lead and carried a 4-1 advantage into the final frame, outshooting the Falcons 49-25 on the night.

The Falcons showed resilience in the third, scoring three times to briefly tie the game 4-4. Hayden Kaczorowski scored twice to lead the comeback, while Braeden Lukas added a goal and two assists. Daniel Masters also chipped in with a shorthanded goal and an assist. Beausejour responded with two late goals to seal the win. Goaltender Seth Hasker made 43 saves in the loss as penalties mounted on both sides in a physical contest.

Lundar returned to the ice the following night and was edged 5-1 by Selkirk at Lundar Arena on Jan. 10. After falling behind 2-0 in the first period, Masters scored unassisted midway through the second to pull the Falcons within one. Selkirk regained control in the third with three unanswered goals, including a power-play marker, while outshooting Lundar 37-29.

The game featured extensive penalties and several misconducts as

tempers flared late. Dylan Leclair stopped 32 shots for Lundar in the defeat.

The Falcons sit sixth in the CRJHL standings with 20 points through 21 games. Lundar will look to rebound on Saturday, Jan. 17, when the Comets visit Lundar Arena, before travelling to St. Jean Arena later that evening to face the St Malo Warriors.

sports & recreation

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Interlake Lightning U18 AAA pick up five points in three games

By Lana Meier

The Interlake Lightning put together an impressive three-game winning streak in early January, defeating the Norman Northstars twice in tightly contested games before finishing the stretch with a high-scoring win over the Kenora Thistles.

Interlake opened the stretch with a 3-2 overtime victory over Norman on Friday, Jan. 2 at Teulon-Rockwood Arena. The Northstars struck first midway through the opening period, but the Lightning gradually gained momentum, outshooting Norman 15-10 in the second frame.

Damon Marquart tied the game on the power play at 4:42 of the second period, converting a setup from Logan Jacobson and Ryder Kirk. Interlake continued to press and took its first lead late in the third when Kirk scored on another man-advantage at 11:38, finishing a passing play from Reid Toporoski and Marquart.

Norman answered back with a power-play goal of its own at 16:06 to force overtime, but the extra session was short-lived. Kirk struck again just 2:12 into overtime, finishing a rush to give the Lightning the win. Seth Schaeffer stopped 34 of 36 shots in goal as Interlake held a narrow 39-36 edge in shots.

The teams met again on Sunday, Jan. 4 in Arborg, where Interlake earned a 4-3 shootout win after another dramatic finish. The Lightning controlled much of the game early, outshooting Norman 31-20 through regulation and overtime.

Lucas Miller opened the scoring late in the first period before Kirk doubled

the lead midway through the second on a setup from Damon Marquart and Mathias Sibilleau. Norman mounted a comeback in the third, scoring three unanswered goals — including two on the power play — to take a 3-2 lead with just over two minutes remaining.

Interlake refused to go quietly. Brody Huver tied the game at 19:37 of the third with a power-play goal off passes from Kirk and Branden Mickall, forcing overtime. After a scoreless extra frame, Reid Toporoski scored the lone goal of the shootout to seal the win, while goaltender Grayson McDonald stopped all three Norman shooters after making 18 saves through regulation and overtime.

The Lightning wrapped up the three-game stretch with a 6-4 win over Kenora on Saturday, Jan. 10 at Teulon-Rockwood Arena, pulling away with a dominant third period. The teams traded chances early, with Interlake holding a slim 13-16 shot deficit after one despite the game being tied 2-2.

Thoren Corbett opened the scoring with a shorthanded goal just 1:50 into the game, and Corwyn Bear added another late in the first, but Kenora responded with a pair of goals, including a power-play marker in the final minute of the period. Mathias Sibilleau tied the game midway through the second before Kenora regained the lead on another power-play goal.

Interlake took over in the third, erupting for four goals while outshooting Kenora 17-14 in the final frame. Sibilleau scored his second of



EXPRESS PHOTO BY LANA MEIER

Interlake Lightning forward Elijah Rempel scored the go-ahead goal in the Lightning's 6-4 U18 AAA win at Teulon-Rockwood Arena.

the night early in the period to even the game, followed by goals from Elijah Rempel and Brody Huver to swing momentum firmly in the Lightning's favour. Kenora added a late goal, but Interlake closed out the win with strong defensive play down the stretch.

Seth Schaeffer made 34 saves in the victory as Interlake finished the night with a 46-38 edge in shots. Sibilleau led the Lightning with two goals, while Ryder Kirk and Branden Mickall each recorded two assists.

The three wins marked a strong start

to January for the Lightning, who showed resilience in close games and depth scoring as they continue league play against Manitoba and northwestern Ontario opponents. Interlake remains 11th in the U18 AAA standings with an 8-21-1 record and 17 points, ahead of Norman and Kenora.

The Lightning return to action Wednesday, Jan. 14, on the road against the Winnipeg Thrashers, followed by road games in Dauphin against Parkland on Jan. 16 and a weekend back-to-back against South-west in Souris on Jan. 17 and 18.

Ice Dawgs snap skid after tough weekend

By Kieran Reimer

The Arborg Ice Dawgs closed out a three-game stretch with a bounce-back win on Jan. 6 after dropping decisions to the Selkirk Fishermen and St. Malo Warriors earlier in the week.

Arborg opened the stretch Jan. 2 at Arborg & District Arena, where Selkirk skated to a 5-1 win behind a four-goal middle frame. Deacon Kemp opened the scoring late in the first, and Sam Khodayary scored twice in the second as the Fishermen took a 4-0 lead into the third. Eastyn

Bochurka broke the shutout at 18:44 of the third, but Izzy Aime answered at 2:23 to restore Selkirk's four-goal cushion. Johnny Enns-Demchuk made 39 saves for Selkirk, while Paxton Moore stopped 39 of 44 shots for Arborg.

The Ice Dawgs were back in action the next night in St. Jean, where they erased deficits twice but fell 5-4 in overtime to St. Malo on Jan. 3. Keston Worley scored three times for the Warriors, including the overtime winner at 5:30. Arborg led 4-3 after 40

minutes on goals from Tytan Johnson, Bradley Kemkaran, Dominick Collins (power play) and Noah Smolinski, but Ben Dias tied it midway through the third before Worley ended it in extra time. Zavery Wahoski made 38 saves for Arborg in the overtime loss.

Arborg finally got back in the win column Jan. 6 at Billy Mosienko Arena with a 4-3 victory over the North Winnipeg Satellites, powered by a three-goal night from Smolinski. After a 2-2 second period, North Winnipeg grabbed a 3-2 lead early in

the third, but Smolinski scored twice shorthanded in a 1:21 span (3:55 and 2:34) to flip the game. Brandon Burak finished with a goal and three assists, and Paxton Moore made 31 saves in the win.

Next up for the Ice Dawgs will be a date with the Selkirk Fishermen on Sunday in Selkirk.

Puck drop is scheduled for 3 p.m. from Selkirk Recreation Complex.

sports & recreation

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Lakers win tournament gold



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Gimli Lakers varsity boys' basketball team captured the championship at The MacGregor Basketball Varsity Boys Invitational with a 76-53 win over Prairie Mountain/Nellie McClung (Co-Op) in the finals on Jan. 10. The Lakers opened the tournament with an 82-50 victory over Landmark 96ers before defeating Carman 79-30 in semifinal play. Gimli is set to compete next in tournaments at Gimli, Carberry and Gabrielle Roy. Pictured left to right, back row: Blake Magnusson (coach), Jesse B., Shane B., Dylan M., AJ N., Ashton C. and Chad Heminger (coach). Front row: Christian M., Gordon M., Ryan T., Kaiden R. and Danyx S.

Lightning teams battle on



EXPRESS PHOTO BY JO-ANNE PROCTER

Interlake Lightning U13 AA defenceman Lilyanna Kotelko rushes the puck out of her end in her team's loss to Eastman Selects in Stonewall on Jan. 6.

Falcons edged by CRJHL leaders in return to play

By Kieran Reimer

The Lundar Falcons will have to wait another week before trying again to secure their first win of the calendar year.

Lundar returned to the ice on Jan. 9 and 10 following the Christmas break, but came up short against two of the Capital Region Junior Hockey League's top clubs, falling 6-4 to the Beausejour Comets and 5-1 to the Selkirk Fishermen.

Friday night at the Sun Gro Centre, the Falcons spotted Beausejour a 3-0 first-period lead before beginning a comeback. Daniel Masters got Lundar on the board late in the second period with a shorthanded, unassisted goal to make it 3-1.

After the Comets restored a three-

goal cushion early in the second, Lundar stormed back in the third. Hayden Kaczorowski scored twice, and Braeden Lukas added the tying goal at 8:27 to pull the Falcons even at 4-4 midway through the period.

The rally was short-lived, however, as Beausejour answered with goals from Jaedys Dancyt and Job Peters in the final six minutes to seal the 6-4 decision.

Seth Hasker made 43 saves for Lundar in the loss, while Beausejour netminder Alex Cavanagh turned aside 21 shots.

The Falcons were back at home Saturday night at Lundar Arena, where Selkirk struck twice in the opening period and never looked back. Masters again provided the lone bright

spot for Lundar, scoring unassisted midway through the second to cut the deficit to 2-1.

Selkirk pulled away in the third with three unanswered goals, including two on the power play, to claim the 5-1 win.

Dylan Leclair finished with 32 saves for Lundar, while Selkirk goaltenders Johnny Enns-Demchuk and Marcus Sharpe combined to stop 28 of 29

shots.

Lundar will look to regroup this week as they continue CRJHL action.

UPCOMING GAMES

Saturday, Jan. 17 — Beausejour at Lundar, 7 p.m., Lundar Arena

Sunday, Jan. 18 — Lundar at St. Malo, 6:30 p.m., St. Jean Arena

To see more photos of your favourite Interlake Athletes

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Spengler Cup success earns Reimer NHL contract with Sens



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Morweena's James Reimer represented Team Canada at the 2025 Spengler Cup in Davos, Switzerland, before signing an AHL professional tryout with the Ottawa Senators organization.

By Kieran Reimer

Morweena's James Reimer has found a hockey home once again.

At 37, Reimer signed an American Hockey League professional tryout with the Ottawa Senators organization on Jan. 8, marking his 18th season in pro hockey.

Following the signing, Reimer joined the AHL's Belleville Senators before signing a one year, one-way National Hockey League deal with Ottawa worth \$850,000 on Jan. 12.

After splitting the 2024-25 season between the Buffalo Sabres and Anaheim Ducks, Reimer went the start of the 2025-26 season without a contract.

He'd then not play in any official games until December when he joined Team Canada for the 2025 Spengler Cup in Davos, Switzerland.

Reimer went on to post a 1-1 record at the tournament including a 19-save performance in Team Canada's 3-2 win over the U.S. Collegiate Selects in the tournament opener on Dec. 26.

He finished the tournament with a 2.52 goals against average and .906 save percentage, putting his name back in NHL talks and helping earn the AHL tryout just over a week after the tournament.

Reimer will now join a struggling Senators club currently without starting netminder Linus Ullmark (personal leave of absence).

Ottawa sit eighth in the NHL's Atlantic Division with a 20-19-5 record following their fourth consecutive loss on Jan. 10 to the Florida Panthers.

Smolinski sparks Ice Dawgs in rebound win

By Lana Meier

The Arborg Ice Dawgs earned two of a possible six points during a busy early-January stretch, dropping a home game to the Selkirk Fishermen, falling in overtime to the St. Malo Warriors, and rebounding with a road win over the North Winnipeg Satellites.

Selkirk skated to a 5-1 victory over Arborg on Jan. 2 at Arborg & District Arena, outshooting the Ice Dawgs 44-40. Deacon Kemp opened the scoring late in the first period and the Fishermen added three second-period goals to take control. Eastyn Bochoruk provided Arborg's lone

goal late in the third, assisted by Dainen Jacobson and Tytan Johnson. Goaltender Paxton Moore faced 44 shots in the loss.

Arborg bounced back the following night but came up just short in a 5-4 overtime loss to St. Malo on Jan. 3 at St. Jean Arena. The Ice Dawgs erased multiple deficits and led 4-3 after two periods, with goals from Tytan Johnson, Bradley Kemkaran, Dominick Collins and Noah Smolinski. St. Malo tied the game midway through the third before Keston Worley completed a hat trick with the overtime winner. Zavery Wahoski made 38 saves for Arborg.

The Ice Dawgs closed the stretch with a 4-3 win over North Winnipeg on Jan. 6 at Billy Mosienko Arena. After trailing 2-0 early in the second, Arborg rallied behind a three-goal performance from Smolinski, who scored twice shorthanded in the third period. Brandon Burak had a goal and three assists, while Moore stopped 31 shots to earn the win.

Arborg sits sixth in the standings with a 7-7 record and 14 points, trailing North Winnipeg by four points for fifth place. The Ice Dawgs return to action Sunday, Jan. 18, when they travel to Selkirk for a 3 p.m. rematch at the Selkirk Recreation Complex.

Altona Maroons provisionally accepted into CRJHL for 2026-27 season

By Lana Meier

The Capital Region Junior Hockey League is set to expand for the 2026-27 season, with the Altona Maroons receiving provisional acceptance into the Junior B circuit.

League officials confirmed the milestone this week, noting that formal ratification is expected to take place at the CRJHL's annual general meeting this spring. The announcement signals that the Maroons are on track to return high-calibre Junior B hockey to Altona beginning next season.

Provisional acceptance allows the

organization to move forward with league planning, including roster development, scheduling and operational preparations, while final approval is completed through the league's governance process.

The CRJHL continues to feature a competitive lineup of Manitoba-based teams this season. Beausejour currently leads the standings with 42 points through 17 games, followed by Selkirk with 34 points in 17 outings. St. Malo sits close behind with 33 points in 15 games, while La Broquerie has 31 points after 17 games. Lundar has earned 20 points

in 19 games, with North Winnipeg and Arborg each sitting at 10 points through 17 and 18 games respectively.

The addition of Altona will strengthen the CRJHL's geographic footprint and further enhance opportunities for players to compete at the Junior B level, while providing communities with high-level hockey close to home.

More details on the Maroons' entry, including home venue information and the team's inaugural CRJHL schedule, are expected following formal league approval in the spring.

Lightning earn rare win in challenging U18 AAA stretch

By Annaliese Meier

The Interlake Lightning picked up a much-needed victory during a demanding three-game stretch in Manitoba Female Hockey League U18 AAA action last weekend, snapping a long skid against tough competition.

Interlake opened the weekend Friday, Jan. 9, with a strong effort against league-leading Winnipeg Ice at Veterans Memorial Sports Complex, building a 2-0 lead through two periods. Goals from Rielle Forfar and Lily MacGregor gave the Lightning early momentum, but Winnipeg Ice scored four unanswered goals in the third period to secure a 4-2 win. Joslyn Tetlock made 37 saves in the loss

as Interlake was outshot 41-20.

The Lightning rebounded Saturday night with a 3-1 home victory over the Central Plains Capitals, earning just their second win of the season. Teagan Bragg opened the scoring on the power play late in the first period before Neve Halpenny netted the game-winner late in the third. Manon Trenholm added an insurance marker, while Tetlock stopped 30 shots to secure the win.

Interlake closed the weekend Sunday against the Westman Wildcats, falling 5-1 despite a competitive shot total. Westman scored three times in the opening period to take control. Ella Riddell scored the Lightning's lone goal midway through the sec-

ond, with Joslyn Tetlock coming on in relief and finishing the game in goal.

Through 21 games, Interlake sits eighth in league standings with a 2-18-0 record. Despite the results, the Lightning continue to face some of the strongest teams in the province on a regular basis as they develop and gain experience at the U18 AAA level.

Interlake is back in action Wednesday, Jan. 14, when it visits the Pembina Valley Hawks at the Access Event Centre in Morden, before travelling to Winnipeg on Sunday, Jan. 18 to face the Winnipeg Avros at Seven Oaks Arena.

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: RAN-DALL DAVID ALBERTSON, 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 11th day of February, 2026. DATED at Gimli, Manitoba, this 14 th day of January, 2026. BAKER LAW CORPORATION SOLICITORS FOR THE EXECUTORS Attention: Grant D. Baker

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Produce Clerk

Submit questions/applications to: Interlake Co-op Sherly Baltazer (Produce Supervisor) 204-376-5245 ext. 06 produce@interlake.crs

Duties/Responsibilities:

- **Approach to Work:** To come to work with a positive, professional approach and attitude.
- **Opening/Closing:** To complete all opening and closing procedures as per schedules.
- **Guest Service:** To help ensure outstanding courteous Guest service is provided at all times.
- **Policy & Procedures:** To help ensure all Policies & Procedures are adhered to in accordance with Interlake Co-op Policy & Procedures manual.
- **Attendance:** To be dependable for all scheduled shifts
- **Merchandising:** To prepare, wrap, price and stock product as required and assigned.
- **Maintenance:** To engage in the proper & safe use of equipment and report any breakdowns to the Bakery/Deli Manager
- **Inventory:** to replenishment inventory as required in accordance with production sheets, to remove all merchandise not fit for sale and to keep proper mark-down reports
- **Administrative:** To be responsible for knowing the operation and administrative requirements of the department.
- **Housekeeping:** To be responsible for maintaining housekeeping standards for the department at all times.
- Other duties as required

Competencies/Qualifications:

Organizational savvy, desire to work in a team setting, strong computer skills, excellent communication and interpersonal skills, commitment to making a positive difference in our members' lives, and strong dependability with effective time management

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Under the authority of the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

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

NOTICE OF INTENT TO DESIGNATE A MUNICIPAL HERITAGE SITE

The Council of the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton gives notice that it intends to designate the following site as a **Municipal Heritage Site** under The Heritage Resources Act (Manitoba).

HEARING LOCATION: Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton Council Chambers 329 River Road, Arborg, MB

DATE & TIME: February 12, 2025 9:00 am

Property to be Designated:

OWNER/APP: Geysir Cooperative Community Club Inc.
AFFECTED AREA: 16006 River Road (1-36988 on 2.12 acres)
Roll No. Geysir, MB 74900

REASON FOR PROPOSED DESIGNATION:

The property has been identified as having significant heritage value due to its:

Architectural Importance:

Geysir Hall is representative of mid-20th-century rural community halls in Manitoba and was an established gathering place by the 1940s, hosting dances, musical evenings, and social events documented in local archival sources.

Cultural and Historic Significance:

The Hall is identified as a central social hub where music, square dancing, and community gatherings supported cultural continuity in the Geysir district, and is closely connected to the Icelandic and pioneer settlement history of the Interlake region dating back to the late 19th century.

Community Importance:

The Hall reflects a strong tradition of community-led governance and volunteerism, with residents contributing time, labour, and fundraising to build, maintain, and sustain this important community facility.

Effect of Designation:

Designation as a Municipal Heritage Site ensures the long-term protection and preservation of this heritage resource. Any alteration, demolition, or development affecting the heritage elements of the site will require municipal approval in accordance with The Heritage Resources Act.

Inspection of Background Information:

A description of the heritage value and relevant documents may be inspected at:

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Deanna Fridfinnson, ACAO/Municipality of Bifrost Riverton 329 River Road, Box 70 Arborg, MB R0C 2R0 Ph: 204-376-2391 Email: acao@bifriv.ca

Objections or Comments:

Any person wishing to object to the proposed designation must file a written objection with the Chief Administrative Officer within 30 days of this notice. Objections must include the name, address, and reasons for objection as required under Section 26(3) of The Heritage Resources Act.

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Rural Municipality of Gimli

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Notice of PUBLIC HEARING

Rural Municipality of Gimli

Topic: Authorization of Expenditure Under Section 169(5) of The Municipal Act
Date: Friday, January 30, 2026
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location: Gimli Council Chambers – 62 2nd Avenue, Gimli, Manitoba

WHEREAS Section 169(5) of The Municipal Act permits Council to authorize an expenditure not included in the adopted financial plan by transfer from accumulated surplus and/or general reserve fund, subject to compliance with Sections 169(6) and 169(7); and WHEREAS Section 169(6) requires that Council give public notice and hold a public hearing in respect of a proposed expenditure under subsection (5); and WHEREAS the RM of Gimli does not have a specific purpose reserve applicable to this expenditure, and therefore the exemption under Section 169(7) does not apply;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council will consider authorizing the expenditure under Section 169(5) at a public hearing scheduled for January 30, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. during a special meeting of Council.

Residents are invited to attend.

To review the FAQ, visit www.gimli.ca or contact the RM office at (204) 642-6650 and speak to the Chief Administrative Officer.

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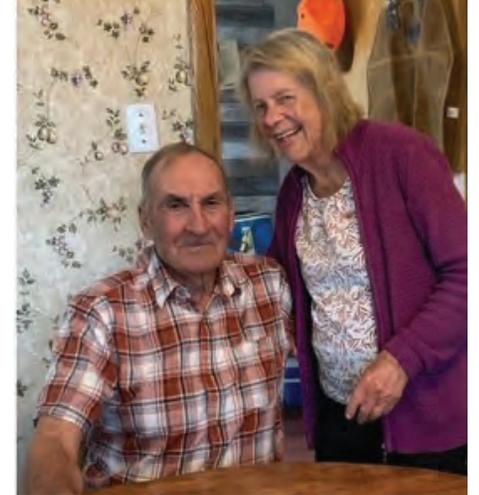
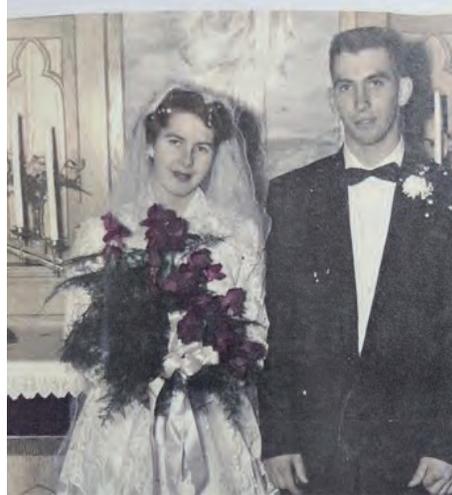
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Your life together is an inspiration to our family and to all who know you.

-Lots of Love from your family



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23 Government Road, P. O. Box 160, Moosehorn, Manitoba, R0C 2E0

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Public Works Manager

The R.M. of Grahamdale is accepting applications for a full-time permanent Public Works Manager.

Under the general direction of the Chief Administrative Officer, the Public Works Manager is responsible for the planning and management of activities and operations in areas of Public Works, Transportation, Drainage, and Landfill operations. Coordinates the resources, including: personnel, contractors and equipment, to ensure the efficient maintenance of the Municipality's infrastructure including: streets, sidewalks, roads, trees, buildings, other public property, lagoons, and waste disposal sites. Work to be performed under minimal supervision with considerable independent judgement and action required in matters which are within the framework of established procedure.

Applicants must possess a valid Manitoba Class 3 Driver's License or be willing to obtain one before the end of the three-month probationary period. Applicants must be familiar with Microsoft Office and have sufficient administrative office experience.

Please apply in writing to:
Public Works Manager Position
R.M. of Grahamdale
PO Box 160
23 Government Road
Moosehorn, MB R0C 2E0

Or by email to:
rm606@grahamdale.ca

Must give full particulars as to education, experience, and salary expectations and must include two references.

Interested applicants are invited to submit an application by 12 Noon, Wednesday, January 28, 2026.

We thank all applicants for their interest, but only those considered for interviews will be contacted.



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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY



The Gordon Howard Centre *The Place For Active Living* **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** (Selkirk Manitoba)

Welcome to a life full of energy, connection, and possibility!
The Gordon Howard Active Living Centre is a vibrant non-profit community hub in downtown Selkirk, Manitoba serving adults in Selkirk, St. Andrews, and St. Clements. We're dedicated to supporting lifelong wellness—physically, mentally, and socially—and we're looking for an inspiring Executive Director to lead our team into exciting future.

About the Role

Reporting directly to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director provides strategic and operational leadership across five key areas:

- Board relations and governance
- Financial management and budgeting
- Staff and volunteer leadership
- Community and stakeholder relations
- Program and facility operations

Qualifications

- Post-secondary education in business, public administration, social science, recreation management, aging adults.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Excel including data entry, formula usage and analysis.
- Experience with the broader Microsoft 365 Environment, including Word, PowerPoint, OneDrive and SharePoint.
- Knowledge of issues affecting aging adults.
- Fundraising, marketing and public relations experience.
- Self-motivated and able to work independently.

Preferred

- 3+ years in the non-profit sector

Conditions of Employment

A Satisfactory Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Search as well as a Satisfactory Adult Abuse Registry Check must be provided.

Apply by January 30, 2026

A full job description is available at www.gordonhoward.ca
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IN MEMORIAM



Barb Sawa

April 11, 1960 - January 15, 2023

She does lead the ride this day,
Her 3rd annual on the heavenly hi-way.
With many a-friend by her side
Into the sunset they do ride.

Beauty memories there always will be,
In my heart and in my soul - you and me.

-Miss you Barbie,
Love Gordon

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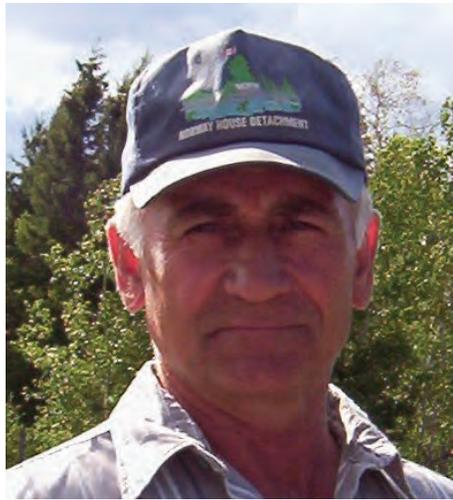
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We are located approx. 18 miles north of Arborg.

Email resume to: swl@sprucewoodloggers.ca
or call 204-378-2997 References required.



IN MEMORIAM



In Memory of
Walter Mychasiw

November 18, 1942 – January 8, 2025

One year has passed since you left my side,
But your love still walks with me every day.

To hear your voice, to see your smile,
To sit and talk to you a while;
To be together in the same old way,
Would be my dearest wish today.
Miss you and lost without you.

-June, Jeff (Inga), Dale (Susan);
grandchildren Hillary (Tyson), Erin (Grant),
Sean, Quinn and
great-grandsons Walker and Bode

IN MEMORIAM



Lindal (Lindi) Reagan Kjeli Erickson
August 11, 1985 - January 9, 2024

In loving memory of
our father, son, brother, and uncle,
who left us all far too soon.

Though your time on earth was brief,
Your love, laughter, and spirit lives on forever
in our hearts.

In your memory, we find comfort, and through
your love, we find peace.

-Always loved and remembered
by your family

'Let Your Light Shine Down'

OBITUARY

Cecile Olson (Mayhew)
1937 - 2025

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our mother, Cecile Olson, at the age of 88 of Winnipeg Beach, MB, after a courageous and feisty fight against Lymphoma Cancer. She passed peacefully with her daughter by her side at the Gimli Johnson Memorial Hospital in the early morning hours of Monday, December 29, 2025.

She is survived by her two children, son John Mayhew and daughter Maureen Mayhew (Jayson) and grand dog "Stella", her step-mother Jeanne Jean-Louis of Calgary, her brother Amos Jean-Louis (Mireille) of Georgia, her sisters Marie Orelie (Joseph) of Inwood, Mesida Dolcin of Haiti, Elvina Dorcelus of Haiti, step-sister Guirlene Joseph (Clay) of Calgary and sister-in-law Nancy Chura Louis of Teulon. She is survived and will be missed by several nieces, nephews, cousins, and many long-time friends near and far as well as her honorary sons Dean and Lindsay.

She is predeceased by her husband Lorentz Olson, her father Jean Jean-Louis, mother Miza Jean, brother Lumenes Jean-Louis, and youngest brother Peter Louis.

Cecile was the oldest of her siblings. She had the opportunity to leave Haiti and while working for the Holiday Inn in the Bahamas she met her first husband Douglas Mayhew. They moved to Toronto, Ontario where he grew up and his family resided. She had her children in Toronto and later resided in a few different cities of Ontario. She worked for a few companies which included the Holiday Inn Toronto (she made sure she told everyone that this is where she met and looked after Pierre and Margaret Trudeau and their children whenever they were in Toronto on business trips), Tonka Toys and Crown Cork and Seal.

In 1976, she moved with her children from Ontario to Manitoba and purchased a farm in Inwood where she resided for several years. In the same year, Cecile was one of the first employees to be hired by Donald Salkeld, owner of Northern Goose in Teulon. She worked there off and on for a number of years and made many lasting friendships.

Cecile also worked for cleaning companies in Winnipeg and then decided to open her own cleaning company (M.P. Cleaning), all while building and operating a dairy farm in Inwood. Farming life she never feared and loved the bush. Grampa and Grandma also lived with us until they purchased their own home in the town of Inwood.

Cecile met and married her husband Lorentz Olson in 1984 and moved to his farm not far away where they would continue farm life of beef cattle until she unfortunately became a widow in 1989. She continued on with the farm life before she moved to her final retirement spot nine years ago in Winnipeg Beach, which she loved thoroughly and made so many new friendships. For several winters, she would escape the cold here and make the trek back to Haiti to visit her sisters and families. She was lucky enough to be able to travel right up until 2024.

Mom lived a full life filled with no fear and always said "hard work will never kill you", and that she held true even up until and during her illness in 2025. You could pop into her place and either find her on the lawnmower making sure her yard looked pristine, weeding her flowers, or driving around the yard on her quad to make sure the spruce trees she dug up from the side of the back roads were doing well or needed some fertilizer to keep them healthy. In the winter, if there was a hint of snow on her sidewalk, it had to be swept or shovelled off as her place always had to be looking perfect. She loved people and treated everyone the same.

Cremation has taken place and a private celebration of life will be held at a later date with family and close friends.

Special thanks to Dr. Adeniyi Adegbesan of Gimli Express Care Clinic for providing the outmost care for Mom over the years. He treated her with such respect at all her appointments, as if she were his own mother. We cannot say enough about the nurses and staff at Gimli hospital that provided the most amazing care to our mother, and the true compassion they showed us to help us through this difficult time. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Huge thanks to the Palliative and Homecare staff that checked in on Mom at home. Thank you so much to Gimli CancerCare and to St. Boniface CancerCare units.

Heaven has gained a feisty one - You lived life your way!
Rest in Peace Mom!



OBITUARY

Margaret Lynn Granberg (nee Olver)
March 30, 1951 – December 20, 2025

Margaret peacefully passed away on December 20, 2025 at her home in Eriksdale, MB.

She was predeceased by her parents Gerald and Beryl Olver and daughter Melissa.

Margaret will be missed by her partner Arne Lindell; siblings Pat (Harry), Terry (Gail), Wes (Wendy) and Warren; her children Nathan (Tammy) and Lisa (Danny); grandchildren Zachary (Raelynn), Joshua, Dradon (Kathleen) and Lateesha; great grandchild Elena along with many nieces and nephews. She will also be missed by her favorite fur baby Karma.

A Celebration of Margaret's life will be held at a later date and will be announced closer to the date of the Graveside Service.

Arrangements by:

ARNASON FUNERAL HOME
Ashern - Lundar
1.204.768.2072 1.866.323.3593



OBITUARY

Eleanor Borodey

Peacefully, with family by her side, on Saturday, January 3, 2026 at the Selkirk Regional Health Centre, Eleanor Borodey, aged 93 years of Gimli, MB passed away.

A memorial mass will be held at a later date.

Full obituary to follow.

Tributes: www.gilbartfuneralhome.com

Gilbart Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.



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OBITUARY



Inga Johnson, (Ingibjorg, nee Vigfusson)
November 28th, 1931 – December 25th, 2025

Mom, Amma, peacefully, on December 25th, 2025 at the Arborg Personal Care Home, Inga Johnson aged 94, passed away.

She was predeceased by her husband Steve Johnson; daughter Shirley Michaluk; son Gerald Johnson, infant son Maurice; and daughter-in-law Shirley Johnson.

She is survived by her son-in-law Michael Michaluk; grandchildren Jeff Johnson (Joanne), Michelle Maffenbeier, Shannon Ireland (Chris), Michael (Tanya) Michaluk and great-grandchildren Joshua, Madison (Joshua), Ceanna (Ethan), Aidan, Alex (Olivia) and Anton. Inga also leaves to mourn her sister Lily Peterson of Prince Rupert, B.C. and many other nieces and nephews.

Amma was the second oldest of eight siblings. When she first moved to Arborg, she really treasured those special visits with sisters Gunna Sigurdson and Alice Sigurdson, who would travel from Riverton to see her.

Amma moved to the Arborg P.C.H in April 2018. She truly enjoyed her stay, where everyone was so kind and helpful keeping her in fine form. Amma was a passionate curling fan and never missed a game on TV. She kept a daily journal and would often refer to it for important information she wanted to share. She loved playing bingo and proudly showing us her winnings – often four quarters (meaning she won four games) Amma also kept her mind sharp by doing crosswords puzzles, which came easily to her. She regularly had her nails and hair done and loved dressing up in her “matchy – matchy” outfits, which always made her feel better.

Amma was always thinking of others, often sending birthday cards well in advance. She especially looked forward to sending and receiving cards during the Christmas season.

The family would like to thank the staff at the Arborg Personal Care Home for taking such good care of Amma during her stay.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to a charity of your choice.

A funeral service was held Wednesday, December 31st, 2025 at Gilbert Funeral Home, Gimli.

Tributes: www.gilbartfuneralhome.com

Gilbert Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.



OBITUARY



Morley James Miller

October 17, 1945 – January 6, 2026

It is with a broken heart that I announce the passing of my dad, Morley Miller, of Ashern, MB.

He was predeceased by Mom (Monika) in 2013; parents Robert and Vada Miller of Ninette, MB; in-laws Edward and Ella Christiansen of Glace Bay, NS; sisters Lois and Sharon; brothers Sonny and Edward; sister-in-law Linda and brothers-in-law Gerry, Christian and Peter.

He is survived by his children Erica (Michael), Brenda (Daryl), Roberta and Brian (Michelle);

grandchildren Christopher (Ciji), Amanda (Curtis), Brendan (Nadia), Adam, Parker, Damon, Christian and Dashell; sisters Ann and Eva; brother Raymond (Leona) and Allan; brothers-in-law Jens and Edward (Debbie) and sister-in-law Erika.

Dad was born in Souris, MB in 1945. He was the fifth of 10 children who grew up in Ninette. Dad met Mom in 1964 while she was working as a nurse's aide at the Sanatorium on the hill. They married in 1965 and went on to raise four children over the next 48 years.

Dad spent his working years at Versatile and then Winnipeg Transit. His retirement years were spent with his sawmill which brought him much joy. He was a jack of all trades, and a talented woodworker.

Mom and Dad always planned to retire at the lake though plans changed when Mom passed away in 2013. Dad bought the “ranch” in Ashern in 2014 and remained there until this fall when his health deteriorated to a point where he was no longer able to live alone safely. The reason I was able to let him stay on the ranch as long as he did, was because of the amazing neighbours he had. There are no words to express how grateful I am for the kindness shown to him by John and Sara Bezemer, Ted and Monica Fuchs, Mr. and Mrs. Stoneham, Ronnie and Joan Geisler, and of course, the Postlethwaite family. Janice and Steven embraced my dad as family, fed him like a king and included him in their family functions. Their sons have helped Dad numerous times over the years. Tyler has gone beyond on more than one occasion when Dad has needed help. Whether it was changing a tire, unfreezing the water line or just dropping by for a beer with “the one armed kid” on a Sunday evening. Thank you to Steven, who over the last year as Dad's health deteriorated, made sure to still pick him up for a ride when parts had to be picked up or cows had to be checked “out east”. To Ted who came to drink “his coffee” three to four mornings a week, Deanne who came to watch hockey and get in a game of cards, Terry for the “barley sandwich” when he went to town to check the mail, my Pinaymootang Health Centre family, a job that allowed me to tell Dad I was out to “work” when we all know it was to make sure he was safe and Helen Webster for the best “mom hug” I have had in over 12 years.

Thank you to the staff at Lakeshore Hospital for the care that was provided to him in his last days. He went out swinging until the very end. The kindness shown to us will never be forgotten.

A Come and Go coffee will be held from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. on Friday, January 16, 2026 at the Ashern Legion Hall. A graveside service and interment will take place in the spring with a Safety Meeting to follow.

Arrangements by:
ARNASON FUNERAL HOME
Ashern - Lundar
1.204.768.2072
1.866.323.3593

OBITUARY



Gunnvör Daniëlsdóttir Ásmundsson
October 8, 1945 – December 24, 2025

Gunnvör Daniëlsdóttir Ásmundsson, age 80, passed away on December 24, 2025 at Johnson Memorial Hospital in Gimli, Manitoba, after a brief illness. Surrounded by her loving family and close friends during her final days, which brought her comfort and happiness.

Born on October 8, 1945 in Njarðvík, Iceland, Gunnvör was the daughter of Daniel Ögmundsson and Jenny Þórkatla Magnúsdóttir.

Gunnvör immigrated to Canada from Iceland in 1970 with her then-husband, Snorri Ásmundsson, and their daughter, Sigrún. In her early years in Canada, she worked as a Pink Lady courier, studied early childhood development, and worked as a preschool teacher.

The family moved to Gimli in the early 1980s, where she and her daughter Sigrún established and operated Siggý's Clothing Store. She later returned to Winnipeg, where she worked as a teacher's aide at Hastings Elementary School, supporting children with special needs.

Gunnvör was widely known in the Icelandic community for her work as administrative assistant to three successive Consuls General of Iceland in Winnipeg, connecting with Icelandic organizations throughout Canada and the United States.

She was deeply involved with the Icelandic Language and Cultural Camp from 1976 to 1994. In 1994, she led 24 camp participants on a trip to Iceland. She taught Icelandic in Winnipeg and Gimli and continued teaching through the New Iceland Heritage Museum until November 2025.

Gunnvör co-organized the first Þorablót hosted by the Icelandic Canadian Frón in Winnipeg in 1974 and helped launch the Winnipeg Kvinnahlaup in 2002. A longtime contributor to Lögberg-Heimskringla, she served on its board and held the roles of secretary and treasurer with the Icelandic Canadian Frón. In 2015, she received the Laurence S. G. Johnson Lifetime Achievement Award from the Icelandic National League of North America.

While residing in Gimli, Gunnvör served as president of the Gimli Icelandic Canadian Society and volunteered with the New Iceland Heritage Museum and the Betel Home.

She is survived by her children: Sigrún Ásmundsson, Ásmundur Dan Ásmundsson and Stefán Hrafn Ásmundsson; grandchildren: Daniel Guðmundur Bergman, Sonja Jenny Ásmundsson, Kristófer Magnús Ásmundsson; siblings: Sólvéig Þórunn Daniëlsdóttir and Hulda Karen Daniëlsdóttir. She is also survived by her former husband, Snorri Ásmundsson.

Gunnvör was predeceased by her parents, Daniel Ögmundsson and Jenny Þórkatla Magnúsdóttir; her brother, Magnús Þórarinn Daniëlsdóttir; and her sister, Sveinborg Þóra Daniëlsdóttir.

A service was held on January 4, 2026 at the Johnson Hall, Waterfront Centre, Gimli, Manitoba. In lieu of flowers donations in Gunnvör's memory may be made to one of the following organizations that were close to her heart:

- Gimli Icelandic Canadian Society,
Email e-transfer: gicsetransfer@outlook.com
- Lögberg-Heimskringla
Online: lh-inc.ca/index.php/support/donation-options
Email e-transfer: lh@lh-inc.ca
- New Iceland Heritage Museum
Online: www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/19567
- Icelandic Festival of Manitoba
Online: www.icelandicfestival.com/donations/amount
Email e-transfer: info@icelandicfestival.com

Gunnvör will be remembered for her warm smile and heartfelt hugs, as well as her kindness and generosity. She gave freely of her time, energy, and care, always looking for ways to help others and strengthen her community. Whether through quiet acts of support or tireless behind-the-scenes work, Gunnvör showed up. As we say goodbye to this remarkable woman, we take solace in the love and light she brought into our lives. Her absence will be deeply felt by all who had the privilege of knowing her.



204-949-2200
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OBITUARY



Sophia Hazel Stanowski (nee Johnson)
September 13, 1935 - December 21, 2025

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of Sophia Hazel Stanowski who left us peacefully on December 21, 2025, at the Arborg Personal Care Home.

Left to cherish her memory are her sons, Jack (Florence) Stanowski and Terry (Dale) Stanowski and daughter, Leanne (Greg) Fedak; grandchildren Janine (Derrick), Kurt (Krystal), Ariel, Cody, Taylor (Bradon), Bridget (Jamie), Brennan (Natasha), Darcie (Eldon) and Ciara (Andrew); great-grandchildren, Connor, Ellie, Mia, Haley, Lincoln, Nova, and Evelyn. She also leaves behind her brother Donald and sister Margaret (Gordie) Palka, brother-in-law Jerry Kozub and sisters-in-law Sophie Wach and Diane Johnson, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Sophia was predeceased by her parents, Bjorn and Enid Johnson, her husband John, and infant son James Daniel.

A Celebration of Life for Sophia will be held this summer. Date to be announced.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to the staff at Arborg Personal Care Home and Assisted Living for the compassionate care and support they provided to Mom over the past years.

The complete obituary can be found at voyagefuneralhomes.com
“In the hearts of those who loved you, you will always be near.”

OBITUARY



Norma Smolinski

It is with profound sadness that the family of Norma Smolinski announces her peaceful passing on January 3, 2026 at the age of 79 years, surrounded by the love of her family.

Born on February 16, 1946 Norma lived a wonderful life full of love and rich in family, community and adventure.

Norma was the daughter of Jean Stetz and Michael Kozub and the beloved wife of David Smolinski for 64 years. She is survived by her children Laurie (Sergei), Clarence (Ramona) and Darryl (Denise); grandchildren Jeremy (Nin) and Graham (Ashley) Campbell, Evanna and Daniel Ivanchuk, Evan (Michelle), Dwight (Kira), Cody, Hannah (Lane) and Ethan (Ashley); great-grandchildren Ava, Noah, Tenleigh, Cesare, Theodora, Emma and Rowen; brother Robert (Lorraine), sisters Jeannette and Geraldine (Barry); brother-in-law Roy (Carol), sisters-in-law Grace (Nels), Marie and Debbie (Jim);

and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear friends.

She was predeceased by her cherished daughter Tracy, infant sister Rose Marie, and brothers-in-law Bill and Lawrence.

Norma grew up on the family farm in Hayak and married David in 1961. They farmed and raised their family together in Shorncliffe until they retired and moved to Arborg. Norma was nurturing and compassionate and had a natural way with animals and people. She gladly accepted the role of caregiver to many. She wasn't afraid of hard work on the farm, always had a big garden and beautiful flowers, and was a wonderful cook - family favorites included her cabbage rolls, dill pickles, and perogies. She lived for spending time with her family, social gatherings, and enjoyed music and dancing. Norma also loved camping and travelling. She and David made many memories travelling across Canada and to too many countries to mention; she was always planning their next adventure.

Community involvement included treasurer for the St. Philip's Neri Ladies' Aid, Chairperson of the Riverdale Workshop, and member of the Arborg & District Health Auxiliary. Norma was always willing to help out with baking, fundraising or whatever was needed. She really enjoyed floor curling "with the girls" and went to as many of her grandchildren's hockey games and school events as she could.

When faced with a difficult diagnosis, Norma displayed extraordinary strength and resilience and kept living her life to its fullest as long as she possibly could. She portrayed a selfless example of courage, humility and love and her inspiration will be felt by all of us forever.

The family would like to extend a special thank you and heartfelt appreciation to the incredible staff at the Gimli Community Cancer Program, Johnson Memorial Hospital, the Arborg Home Care Nurses, CancerCare Manitoba HSC, Dr. David Christiansen and Dr. Nazim for their dedication to Norma's comfort and compassionate care.

Cremation has taken place and a funeral service will be held on January 24, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at the Arborg Community Hall, Father Vijay Deivanayagam officiating. Honorary pallbearers will be her seven grandsons. Burial at the St. Joseph Roman Catholic Cemetery will take place immediately afterward with lunch to follow.

The family kindly requests that in lieu of flowers donations can be made to CancerCare Manitoba or the Humane Society.

The angels have you now in their warm embrace Norma. You were an extraordinary person with a blessed life who truly understood that the purpose of life is to love - how lucky we were to have you in our lives.

"A beautiful soul is never forgotten, just remembered with great love."

OBITUARY



Hal Wayne Sigurdson
September 28, 1949 - January 7, 2026

With heavy hearts we announce the sudden passing of our beloved husband, father, and grandfather Hal Wayne Sigurdson on January 7, 2026.

He is survived by his loving wife of 54 years Janis (Nee Weatherburn); sons Darren (Michelle) and Bryan (Becky); cherished grandchildren Lexa, Lucy, Fletcher and Andie, and goddaughter Becky. He is remembered by his brothers Ray, Ken (Peggy) and Terry (Angeline), and sister Cindy (Floyd) Thorkelson, along with brother-in-law Larry (Marlene) Weatherburn, sisters-in-law Kim Wiebe and Wanda Zasitko, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Hal's life revolved around his family, his business, and his community (and not necessarily in that order!). If you ever had the pleasure of visiting him at the shop, you'd remember his unique

sense of customer service, the smell of popcorn, and his trail of scattered bubblegum wrappers. Hal spent many hours enjoying hockey games, watching his grandchildren play various sports, and being the self-appointed beer manager of the Lunder Falcons. He was always focused on his family, but to be honest, he should have directed a little of that focus to the road!

During his years of retirement, Hal made many trips across the back lane to visit his Napa Girls, always coming back with a huge smile on his face. He also spent countless hours visiting with old friends for a card game or coffee; he went to make their day, but really, it made his day even better. In recent years, his adopted beach family looked after him, taking him on all sorts of adventures and along the way they even helped him realize that beer tastes better at the lake!

He put his heart and soul into Lunder, volunteering on countless boards and organizations. His fingerprints are all over this community and his legacy will live on in each and every one of them.

The family would like to extend their deepest gratitude to Shannon Granberg, Michael Stoyanowski and Scott Ward for their assistance and efforts on January 7th.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 24, 2026, at the Lunder Legion Hall. Private interment to follow at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Coldwell Lunder Community Foundation, Box 154, Lunder, MB. R0C 1Y0, or a charity of your choice.

Arrangements by:
ARNASON FUNERAL HOME
Ashern - Lunder
1-204-768-2072
1-866-323-3593

OBITUARY



Malvina Rose Richardson
June 6, 1944 - January 1, 2026

Malvina Rose Richardson, age 81, passed away quietly on January 1, 2026 at Gimli Community Health Centre in Gimli, Manitoba after a short but recurring illness.

She was born in Winnipeg but made Gimli her home, working at New Horizons and various volunteer organizations. She will be missed by her family and many, many friends for her infectious positive outlook, her sassy comebacks, and her love for playing bingo (God forbid you should miss a number on your card). She was an avid bowler and participated in the Special Olympics several times.

She was the last of her immediate family having been predeceased by her mother, Agnes Richardson, her sister Gail Filby, and her brother Wayne Richardson.

Thanks to Jackie, Stacie and the staff at Community Bridges Gimli, and to the staff at Gimli Hospital, Arborg Hospital, and IERHA for their kindness.

A special thanks to Auntie Doe for being her emotional support for so many years.

In keeping with her wishes, Malvina is to be cremated and when the weather is better in the spring, her ashes will be placed beside her mother whom she loved. There will be a small graveside ceremony at that time.

Tributes: www.gilbartfuneralhome.com

Gilbart Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.



OBITUARY



Cynthia "Marge" Rose Tomko (nee Fidler)
April 25, 1938 - December 29, 2025

With heavy hearts, the family announces the passing of Marge on December 29, 2025 at the age of 87 following a brief battle with leukemia.

Marge was born April 25, 1938 in Selkirk, Manitoba. She was predeceased by her husband Lawrie in 2019, and is survived by her sons, Peter and Clifford; her daughters, Laurie-Jean (Denys) and Samantha (Ross); grandchildren Dustin, Blaine, Damon, Breanne, Brittany, Paige, Brandon, Evan, and great-grandchildren Sienna, Ethan, Natalie, Gage, and Lawson.

In 1965, Marge moved to Arborg where she raised her family and became a valued member of the community. She was a talented seamstress, known throughout the area as the person to go to for alterations and custom-made items. If it could be sewn, she could make it. Marge also loved spending time at the Arborg Legion, where she was a proud member for 45 years. She generously volunteered her time working the meat draw and enjoyed participating in all the functions held there, forming many lasting friendships over the years.

After the passing of her husband in 2019, she retired in Brandon, MB, to be close to family and formed many new friendships at her retirement home and PCH.

Marge's family would like to thank Brandon Health Centre for their care. A special thank you to the wonderful staff at Dinsdale Personal Care Home whose care, kindness, and friendship made Mom feel loved and part of their family.

As per Marge's wishes, a private family service will be held in her honour.

Always remembered, always loved.



Condolences: www.memorieschapel.com

OBITUARY



Ronald Wayne Cosens
January 10, 1961 - December 30, 2025

Youngest child of the late Jesse James and Rosemary Cosens of Fisherton, Manitoba.

Forever loved by partner Jennifer Imlah.

Predeceased by sisters Patricia Rowley, Carolyn Larocque, Darlene Todoruk; step-son Tyler Fehr-Eckford.

Survived by siblings Edwin and Thelma; nephew Billy (raised as little brother); brothers-in-law Dennis Larocque, David Todoruk, Archie Thompson; step children Thomas and Kathryn; grandchildren Annabel and Rosemarie. Nieces and nephews and their children will miss their uncle.

As per Ron's wishes, there will be no funeral.

Share your memories and raise a glass to see him off!

Thank you to the staff of the Fisher Personal Care Home and a big thank you to the R.M. of Fisher.



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