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10th-end heartbreaker

EXPRESS PHOTO BY BRETT MITCHELL

Winnipeg Beach curler Elias Huminicki, second for Team MacDonald, throws a rock during a tense final end Sunday at the 2026 BUNGE Men's Provincial Curling Championship at the Selkirk Rec Centre. Team MacDonald fell in a 10th-end heartbreaker after a 7-7 tie, with Team Calvert advancing to the national championship in St. John's, N.L.

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Get snapping with Gimli's Fishing Photo Contest and ITA

By Patricia Barrett

The Interlake Tourism Association (ITA) and the RM of Gimli have teamed up to get people hooked on Lake Winnipeg and the great outdoors with an ice-fishing photo contest.

The RM and its recreation department is inviting people to pick up a Gimli-branded fishing lure at a local sponsor in Gimli or Winnipeg Beach in exchange for a perishable food item, which will go to the Evergreen Basic Needs food bank.

With their lures in hand, anglers can head out to Gimli's ice-fishing village where they can take a snap of their catch and lucky lure, tag #rmgimlimb and earn a chance to win a prize.

The ITA provided funding to the RM for 250 Gimli-branded fishing lures.

"The RM is grateful for the ITA grant, which provided the incentive to launch this initiative," said Gimli CAO D.J. Sigmundson.

The idea for the photo contest and the branded lures originated with staff at the recreation and leisure department, he said. And generous community sponsors are donating prizes.

Gimli Home Hardware donated two \$15 gift certificates, one \$20 gift certificate and two ice-fishing rods then "doubled their sponsorship after the initial items were claimed quickly." Carlos Cucina (Gimli) donated two \$25 gift certificates and a T-shirt. The Lakeview Resort Gimli donated two \$25 gift certificates. Bruce's Marine (Gimli) donated one \$50 gift certificate. Winnipeg Beach's Park Place

Meat & Grocery donated two \$25 gift certificates. And Interlake Brewery donated two \$25 gift certificates.

Interlake Tourism Association manager Dee King said the Interlake, and Gimli in particular, offers year-round experiences.

The fishing photo contest is a great example of how tourism can be community-driven and bring locals and visitors together.

"What makes this project special to Interlake Tourism and our Tourism Development Grant is that it tells the story of Gimli through the people who actually live, work and spend time here. It's a natural way for residents and visitors to share authentic experiences and showcase what makes the area unique," said King. "I really see this as capturing the spirit of Gimli. Tourism works best when it is collaborative, and this brings together local businesses, anglers, families and visitors to collectively share real moments rather than staged promotion."

People can head out on the ice after they pick up a lure, spend time with their friends and family and share those experiences online.

"To me, that creates a full circle where you are supporting local businesses, connecting with a welcoming ice fishing community and helping tell the broader story of the region," said King. "Tourism is about atmosphere as much as attractions. I always emphasize that you are not just telling people what exists somewhere — you're showing the vibe, the fun and the energy of a place."



The Gimli fishing photo contest runs until April 5. Visit Gimli Rec on Facebook for more information about the contest and the fishing village or call the recreation centre at 204-642-6670.



Evergreen Staff Spotlight

Celebrating the People Who Make Our Schools Work

Meet Noreen Barkman – Grade 1 Teacher, Riverton Early Middle School

For 30 years, Noreen Barkman has been guiding Evergreen's youngest learners through some of the most important steps in their educational journey. From the first sounds of reading to the first sentences of writing, she has celebrated countless milestones with her students — and still feels the same joy today as she did three decades ago.

Teaching was always her dream. "From my youngest memories, I wanted to be a teacher," Noreen recalls. Inspired by her mother, also a teacher in Evergreen, she grew up surrounded by lesson plans and the passion for helping children succeed.

Noreen says one of the most rewarding moments in her career is witnessing a child realize they are a reader or writer. "To see the pride in their eyes is irreplaceable," she explains. "Students often want to share their growth by reading to the principal or another adult — it's such a powerful moment."

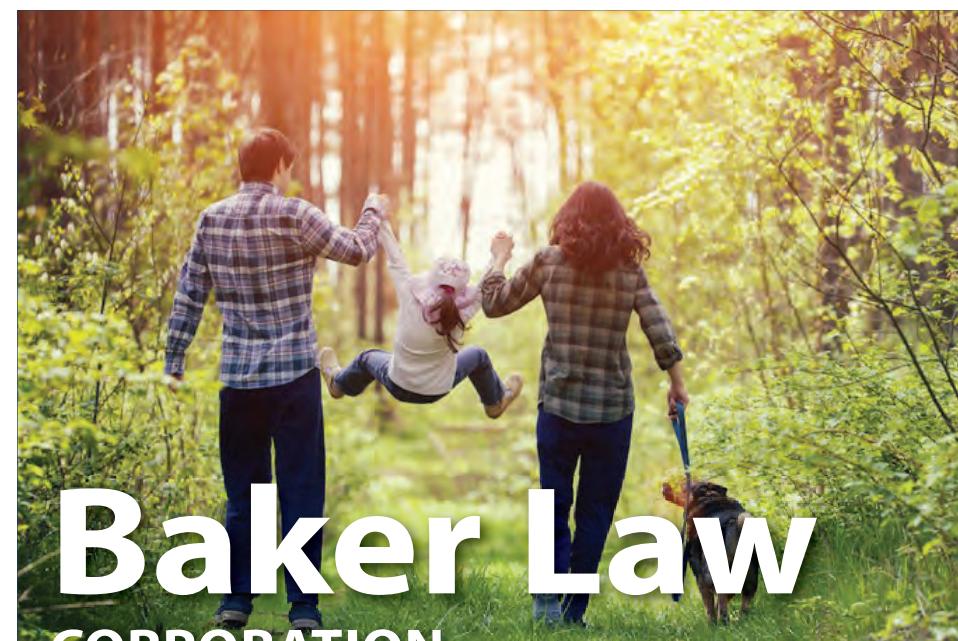
Beyond the classroom, Noreen treasures the connections she's built within Evergreen. "We are a small division, which makes it easier to get to know people personally, share goals, and feel connected between schools," she says. She also appreciates the division's strong commitment to professional learning, which has fueled her own growth as an educator.

At the heart of her philosophy is a deep belief in the importance of public education. "Public education is a fundamental right for all," Noreen affirms. "Children are at the heart of what we do, and our goal will always be to help them learn and grow as they become citizens who will improve our future."

Thank you, Noreen, for your dedication, passion, and the countless lives you've touched in Evergreen classrooms.



Interviewed by and pictured with trustee Sandra Davies.



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Madeline's Closet founder earns provincial recognition at WEYA gala

By Lana Meier

A rural Manitoba entrepreneur was among those recognized last week as women business leaders from across the province were celebrated at the 2025 Manitoba Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards.

Shannon Dupont, founder of Madeline's Closet Inc., was named the Rural Nominee Award winner during the Jan. 29 gala at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. The award honours women entrepreneurs driving economic growth and opportunity outside major urban centres, recognizing leadership, innovation and community impact.

For Dupont, the recognition reflects nearly two decades of work building a volunteer-run charity focused on supporting women and families across rural Manitoba.

"Standing here tonight is honestly a little surreal — mostly because when you run a charity in rural Manitoba, you don't exactly expect to end up on a stage like this," Dupont said during her acceptance speech. "This recognition means more than I can fully put into words because it shines a light on work that often happens quietly, behind the scenes and far from the spot-

light."

Founded in Inwood, Madeline's Closet was envisioned as a space where women and their children could access new or gently used clothing and household items regardless of their financial situation. Dupont said the idea grew out of an experience nearly 17 years ago, when she learned that retail stores were cutting up usable clothing and discarding it as damaged or written-off merchandise.

"As a social worker, I knew how many people could benefit from receiving new clothing," she said.

When Dupont asked retailers whether they would donate items if she ensured they were given directly to individuals and not resold, the answer was yes. From that agreement, Madeline's Closet was born.

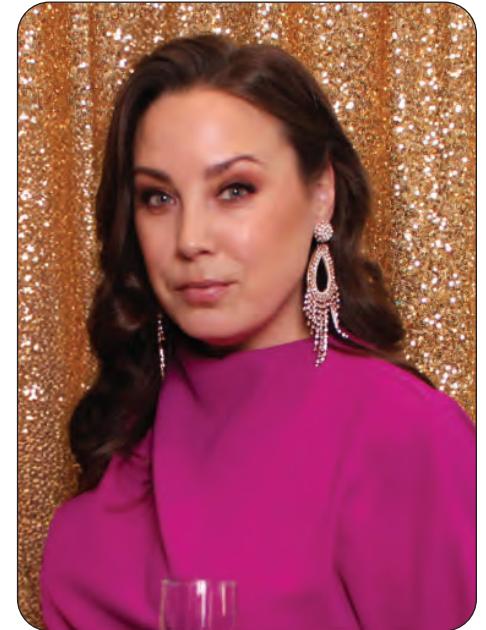
The organization was named in honour of Métis Elder Madeline Sanderson, who provided guidance and teachings to Dupont in her youth. Dupont said Sanderson emphasized the importance of staying true to one's roots and using that strength to help others.

"Madeline's Closet is the embodiment of kindness and community," Dupont said. "I felt it was fitting to



EXPRESS PHOTO BY JILL DEMIANIW

Shannon Dupont of Inwood, founder of Madeline's Closet Inc., accepts the Rural Nominee Award at the 2025 Manitoba Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards.



Chantelle Dione Enns, a finalist at the 2025 Manitoba Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards, is the owner of Chantelle Dione Photography, known for portrait and branding work focused on authenticity and connection.

name it after someone who taught me those values."

Today, Madeline's Closet works with a network of more than 24 retail partners that provide clothing and

household goods. Volunteers repair damaged items, launder donations and prepare them for display. Indi-

Continued on page 4

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AA Winnipeg Beach

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EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Winners and finalists gather during the 2025 Manitoba Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards gala, held Jan. 29 at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. The annual event recognizes women entrepreneurs from across Manitoba.

> WEYA, FROM PG. 3

viduals can access the program once a month and receive up to three clothing or household items at no cost.

Items that cannot be repaired are repurposed into patchwork blankets, which are given to families who have lost their homes due to fire.

Dupont said the program addresses both social and environmental needs. Manitoba has one of the highest child poverty rates in Canada, and providing free clothing helps ensure children are prepared for the province's diverse weather while easing financial pressure on families. At the same

time, the initiative diverts thousands of items from landfills each year.

To date, more than 750,000 individuals have accessed the program over its 17 years of operation. Madeline's Closet is entirely volunteer-run and receives no government core funding.

The organization now serves between 1,000 and 1,500 individuals each month at its Inwood location, along with an additional 800 to 1,000 people monthly through partner sites across Manitoba.

"There's a huge gap in services for rural Manitoba, and Madeline's

Closet fills a real need in the Inwood area," Dupont said. "I'm very proud to be part of that."

Dupont said the work has come full circle for her both personally and professionally, having been born and raised in Inwood in the RM of Armstrong — the same community where Madeline's Closet continues to operate.

The annual awards are coordinated by the Winnipeg Women's Community and drew finalists from across the province, selected from more than 200 nominations. Now in its 34th year, the

Continued on page 5



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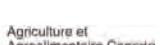


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> WEYA, FROM PG. 4

program aims to spotlight women strengthening Manitoba's economy and communities.

Also recognized during the evening was Chantelle Dione Enns, owner of Chantelle Dione Photography, who was named a finalist among the province's top women entrepreneurs.

Enns said being named a WEYA finalist was a meaningful moment of reflection, both personally and professionally.

"Being named a finalist was incredibly affirming," she said. "The work I do is deeply rooted in confidence, identity and personal evolution, and that kind of impact is not always easy to measure. To have it recognized alongside so many inspiring entrepreneurs across Manitoba meant a great deal."

Enns' photography work has earned a reputation for visual storytelling that centres authenticity and connection, particularly through portrait and branding photography for women-owned businesses and entrepreneurs. She said strong imagery can play a critical role in how business owners show up in their work.

"When a woman-owned business has imagery that reflects her confidence, clarity and authority, it changes how she shows up in her marketing, her sales and her leadership," Enns said. "I don't just create beautiful photos — I help women see themselves as the face of their brand in a

way that feels true and powerful."

Her business began photographing rescue dogs and the people who loved them, before evolving into a broader focus on personal storytelling and brand identity. Over time, Enns said she recognized a gap between traditional portrait photography and the deeply personal moments people were actually living.

"I wanted to create space for personal celebration and for branding images that feel like the person themselves, rather than something copied from a template," she said. "That curiosity is what shaped the work I do today."

While only one recipient is selected in each category, organizers emphasized that being named a finalist represents a significant achievement.

"Being selected from more than 150 nominated women across Manitoba is no small feat," awards chair Christine Thiessen said in a statement following the event. "Every finalist represents excellence in entrepreneurship, leadership and community impact."

The gala also recognized award recipients across several categories, including emerging business, young entrepreneur, contribution to community, BIPOC nominee, 2SLGBTQIA+ nominee, lifetime achievement and overall woman entrepreneur of the year.

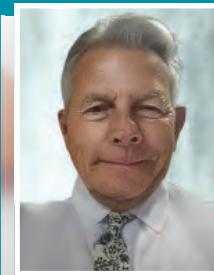
Organizers said the event serves not only to honour individual achievements but also to

connect and inspire women business owners across Manitoba, from urban centres to rural communities.

For Dupont, the award represents both recognition and renewed motivation.

"I'll take this back to Inwood as proof that the work being done there matters, is seen and is making a difference," she said. "Rural voices matter. Women's work matters. And meaningful change doesn't only happen in big cities."

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Former Gimli councillor Andy Damm says his resignation was 'a protest'

By Patricia Barrett

Former Gimli councillor Andy Damm said his resignation from council last month was done in protest to procedures that he could not in good conscience accept.

The RM reported that Damm had handed in his resignation on Jan. 24, leaving a four-member council consisting of Mayor Kevin Chudd, Deputy Mayor and Coun. Kurt Reichert and councillors Richard Petrowski and Thora Palson until the upcoming municipal election in October.

The *Express* had asked the RM a few weeks ago to share Damm's resignation and confirm the mayor's knowledge around the resignation, but it didn't respond to email questions.

Damm spoke with the *Express* last week, saying his stepping down was a "protest resignation" pertaining to municipal leadership.

"In my opinion, if the residents of Gimli knew some of the background behind recent decisions, they would be very uncomfortable with the direction of their RM," said Damm.

What "broke the camel's back" with regard to his decision to leave were two recent events.

"The first reason pertains to the procedures around interim chief administrative officer [Valorie Unrau] and the new CAO appointment of D. J. Sigmundson, plus the contract that was signed with him. Those procedures, to me, were abhorrent. They can probably do it, but I think it should have been done in an open context. And it wasn't," said Damm. "The other reason for my resignation had to do with the procedures around the formal investigation and the suspension of the mayor."

The *Express* had previously reported — after the RM issued a statement on its website — that a formal complaint against Mayor Chudd made in 2025 resulted in an investigation using a Halifax-based lawyer and investigator. The investigator's report determined that Chudd had committed several transgressions. Council subsequently voted to suspend Chudd from all mayoral duties for seven days last month, but without a loss of pay.

The *Express* had asked the municipality how each councillor had voted on the suspension of the mayor, why the mayor wasn't docked pay, how much the total investigation cost and why the investigation report couldn't be shared with the public (see Jan. 22, 2026, *Express* online). The RM cited confidentiality legislation.

The paper also reported that Sigmundson was appointed CAO late last year by a majority of council consisting of Mayor Chudd and councillors Reichert and Palson during a special meeting held on Dec. 15, 2025. Sigmundson's appointment took effect on Dec. 22. Councillors Damm and Petrowski had voted against the appointment.

RM and council spokesperson Christine Payne had told the paper that Sigmundson's "proposal" for the top job had been chosen over that of interim CAO Valorie Unrau's, and that "no formal application process occurred" and the job hadn't been publicly posted (see Dec. 25, 2025, *Express*).

Sigmundson had been serving as the RM's strategic projects coordinator before his appointment as CAO. He has years of CAO experience through former jobs with the RM of St. Clements and the RM of St. Andrews.

Although Damm said he couldn't abide by the leadership decisions made with regard to the two recent matters, he couldn't elaborate further as those matters had been discussed in meetings not open to the public.

"My first and utmost responsibility is to the residents of Gimli, the ratepayers and constituents, not to council. My responsibility is to work with council on behalf of the people of Gimli," said Damm. "And I could not stand by these decisions in all good conscience. A lot of the background to these matters is contained in in-camera sessions."

Damm is a retired commercial airline pilot who also served as a pilot union representative, and he's no stranger to addressing difficult organizational matters.

At a regular council meeting on April 17, 2024, for instance, Damm said he would've been "remiss" in his duties to municipal taxpayers had he remained silent on financial losses of just under \$1 million at the Gimli Community Development Corporation. Mayor Chudd was the head of the CDC board at the time Damm blew the whistle on the corporation's fiscal decline (see April 25, 2024, *Express*).

Damm said he feels "disheartened" when people "sit and watch while things go on" but say and do nothing to change it.

"This is a protest resignation more than anything else," he repeated when asked about the municipal workplace milieu, "for the mere reason — and this is exactly the way I feel and I've said it numerous times — that if you're sitting there being complacent, then you're complicit with what's



EXPRESS FILE PHOTO

Former councillor Andy Damm, shown at a debate, said he resigned in protest in January with regard to matters pertaining to the hiring of the RM's latest CAO and the formal investigation and suspension of the mayor.

going on."

He was aware of some of the speculative statements on social media that popped up after the news of his resignation, he said, and he welcomes people to reach out to him or stop him in the street whenever he's in Gimli or another part of the municipality.

"I'm in Gimli frequently," said Damm, who lives outside town. "I welcome people to speak with me about community concerns."

Samantha Hampton, the president of the Gimli Chamber of Commerce, said Damm served as a liaison between the municipality and the chamber, and they worked together on a couple of business-focused events.

"We thank him for his time serving the community and wish him well moving forward," said Hampton, who is in her second term leading the chamber.

When she heard the news that Damm had resigned and saw some social media posts, Hampton said she sought clarity with regard to the speculation — and she encourages others to do the same.

"Coun. Damm's resignation has understandably left many in the community with questions including myself. Over the past weeks, social media speculation has grown, which

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Greenvale Equipment, Enns Bros. to merge

By Lorne Stelmach

Greenvale Equipment and Enns Brothers recently announced plans to combine forces.

The two John Deere dealerships will merge to create what they say will be an even stronger John Deere dealership network to serve the province.

Company representatives said the merger brings together two trusted organizations with deep agricultural roots, shared values and a long history of supporting farmers across Manitoba. They said the partnership is expected to create a stronger, more resilient company focused on improving customer service, expanding employee opportunities and investing in the future of agriculture.

"This represents an exciting step

forward for both our customers and our employees," said Curwin Friesen, president of Greenvale Equipment. "By combining resources, expertise and technology, we'll be able to serve farmers with an even broader range of solutions and faster access to the parts and service they depend on."

Enns Brothers CEO Ray Bouchard said the two companies share a long-standing commitment to customers, employees and the communities they serve, noting the merger will provide the scale and financial strength needed to continue investing in innovation and meeting the evolving needs of the agriculture industry.

GVE began in 1989 when Ernie and Glen Kehler bought the John Deere dealership in Morden. Today the company operates locations in Alto-

na, Killarney, Morden, and Treherne.

Enns Brothers, meanwhile, had its start when Jake and Harry Enns entered the farm equipment business in 1953 as an Allis-Chalmers and New Holland dealer in Sanford. Three years later, they became a John Deere dealer, eventually moving the business to the corner of Highway 3 and the Perimeter at Oak Bluff. Enns Brothers currently operates nine locations across Manitoba.

"There's always been synergies between Greenvale and Enns. We're neighbours in the province. ... We've had a strong relationship," said Friesen. "It made sense for us to talk about joining forces to better serve the province."

Friesen stressed that they're balancing this idea of getting bigger with

also not losing local connections.

"In the John Deere world, size and scale matter. The challenge in the agriculture world for dealers like us is having the right piece of equipment on the yard. ... The greater we can work together with Enns, we can fit more of those needs," he said.

"Scale allows us to meet the needs of growers for what their equipment needs are ... and we also have that same challenge on the parts side. Now we will be tapping into 13 branches that all have inventory. That scale allows us to provide more offerings faster to customers; that's even true with service techs."

The merger is expected to be completed by April.

> RESIGNATION, FROM PG. 6

often happens when people feel that they don't have the full picture," she said. "If this were a one-off with the full story on the table, it would be easier to accept. But when news headlines continue to reference suspensions, resignations and investigations without clear explanations, people naturally start filling in the blanks and that's not healthy for any municipality."

The Express has inquired after numerous resignations of senior leadership at the RM, including chief administrative officers, that occurred since the new iteration of council took office after the 2022 election. The municipality replied consistently that it was unable to share details as those are considered private personnel matters.

But a lack of detail has likely created a perception of instability.

And Hampton said business thrives when there's confidence in leadership.

"From a business and chamber perspective, transparency and stability matter. Businesses thrive when communities feel informed, connected

and confident in their leadership," said Hampton. "My hope is that the municipality takes an honest look at the tone of community conversations right now and considers how communication and transparency from leadership shape that climate. Clear, consistent information builds trust, reduces speculation and helps keep communities focused on moving forward together."

The Express reached out to another council member to see if they'd offer comment on Damm's resignation.

The Express asked the RM and council if there was any impropriety or rules broken around former interim CAO Valorie Unrau and the hiring of D.J. Simundson as CAO, and if there was any impropriety or rules broken around the process of the suspension of the mayor.

The paper also asked for a copy of the investigation report into the mayor and if council could say what he did.

Coun. Thora Palson spoke with the Express, saying the [short] answer to all four questions is "No."

But she added that with regard to

the suspension of the mayor, council was "guided by a lawyer with expertise in code of conduct investigation."

The RM is unable to share a copy of the investigative report because it is bound by legislative requirements.

Manitoba's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) "require municipalities to protect the confidentiality of personnel-related investigations, personal information and records containing legal advice," said Palson. "As a result, the full investigation report and related cost details cannot be released publicly. These records fall under mandatory exceptions to disclosure that apply to personal information about an identifiable individual (FIPPA s.17), information harmful to a public body's financial or legal interests (FIPPA ss.23-25) and records subject to solicitor-client privilege (FIPPA s.25)."

With regard to what the mayor did that resulted in his suspension, Palson said "council is satisfied that all concerns raised during the investigation can be addressed with improved policy and training."

She shared details of the approved training program, which will be de-

livered in March and will address the following:

A. Governance & Role Clarity Training – strengthening the separation between political oversight and administrative operations.

B. Respectful Workplace & Psychological Safety Training – addressing behaviours that contribute to workplace toxicity.

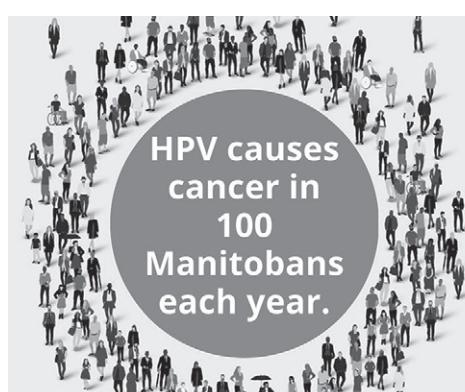
C. Ethical Leadership & Duty-to-Act Training – equipping council to intervene appropriately.

She said she's reflecting on the recent issues and sees this as an opportunity to strengthen the organization.

"I always see the positive side of things," said Palson. "This is an opportunity in which we can rebuild and repair the organization and create a sustainable environment and attract people to be part of our organization."

The RM has been trying to inform the public about issues, she said, but reiterated that personnel matters are confidential and discussed in in-camera sessions.

"In camera is part of an oath of office that we councillors take to keep the matters discussed in-camera confidential," she said.



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Filing taxes key to accessing benefits and services

By Jennifer McFee

With tax season fast approaching, it's important to know that tackling this annual task can help you access benefits and credits that could enhance your financial situation.

Taxes are due to be filed and paid on or before April 30. However, you can file your taxes at any time, which ensures your ability to access some housing and health-care services.

It's important to file an income tax return each year, even if you have no income, low income or are on social assistance. In contrast, if you don't file your taxes, you might miss out on tax breaks, income supplements or government subsidies. If you know someone in this situation, you may want to encourage them to file their taxes as well.

"Even if you don't work or owe any tax, filing a tax return can help you and your family access benefits and feel more financially secure," said Wendy Fontaine, director of health services, public health and wellness with the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority.

"As part of a caring community, we can also encourage others to file their taxes so they receive the benefits they deserve. Filing income tax returns can support people who are struggling, so it is important for people of all ages to file their taxes."

Those who don't file their taxes may miss out on the Canada Child Benefit, GST credit, Canada Carbon Rebate or Disability Tax Credit. Some of these benefits may not be retroactive.

In an example on the provincial government's website (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/tenants/tax.html>), a single parent with two children under the age of four earning \$15,000 annually could potentially access about \$16,000 in benefits by filing taxes. In

this example, the benefits include a GST refundable credit of \$842 (\$210.50 paid quarterly), Canada Child Benefits of \$12,800 (\$1,066.66 paid monthly), Working Income Tax Benefit of \$1,844 (with the income tax refund or part paid quarterly), Manitoba Child Benefit of \$840 (\$35 paid monthly) and Manitoba Personal Tax Credit of \$266 (refunded upon tax filing). After filing taxes and accessing benefits, this single parent's total annual income would increase to \$31,592.

According to Jennifer Dann, manager of health services for social work and patient relations with the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority, many people don't realize that filing taxes also provides important documentation needed when accessing services such as personal care homes or subsidized housing.

"If you or a family member may require a more supportive living environment, it is important to know that personal care home rates are set by Manitoba Health and are calculated based on your Canada Revenue Agency notice of assessment," Dann said.

"You are required to submit your notice of assessment to the personal care home on an annual basis, and your rates are recalculated accordingly."

If you are experiencing housing instability, many housing organizations and other support services also require current financial information before considering your application.

"It's unfortunate when situations like this arise because working through financial needs becomes even more difficult when there is the added pressure of illness and hospital stays," Dann said.

"Depending on your legal circumstances, your family may or may not be able to help you file your taxes.

Ensuring your taxes are completed annually can ease their burden and make access to programs that enhance well-being or improve social circumstances a smoother process."

Income tax resources:

- For low-income Manitobans, information about the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program is available at www.gov.mb.ca under the residents' portal.

- A 24-page plain-language booklet, Get Your Benefits (<https://fcfcstaxes.com/get-your-benefits/#get-copy>), lists many benefits and programs Manitobans may be eligible for.

- More income tax information is available on the Government of Canada website at www.canada.ca. Information about free tax clinics can be found at www.canada.ca/taxes-help.

- In the Interlake-Eastern region, most communities host a Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, where people with simple tax situations and modest incomes can have their taxes completed for free. To find a program in your area, visit <https://www.ierha.ca/programs-services/life-style/get-your-benefits/>. Many Seniors Resource Councils participate by acting as drop-off depots for volunteer tax filers.

- For those without a local Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, Community Financial Counselling Services (CFCS) offers tax services both virtually and by phone. CFCS also provides free and confidential financial counselling and coaching, assistance accessing benefits, and counselling for individuals and families impacted by gambling. Visit www.cfcs.mb.ca/ or call toll-free 1-888-573-2383 to learn more.

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Farmers invited to nominate local groups for BASF community funding

Nominations open from Feb. 3 to Feb. 28

By Lana Meier

Local farmers are being encouraged to give back to their communities by nominating organizations for a major national funding program through BASF Agricultural Solutions Canada.

BASF has opened 2026 nominations for its Growing Home with BASF program, which will award a total of \$160,000 to community organizations across Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.

From Feb. 3 to Feb. 28, BASF customers in the four provinces can nominate a local organization they believe is making a meaningful difference in their community. Nominations must be submitted by BASF customers, typically farmers or growers, though the nominated organizations them-

selves can include a wide range of community groups.

Eligible groups include child-care centres, schools, agricultural societies, hospital foundations and other community-based non-profits.

The program, now in its fourth year, is designed to recognize and support the organizations that help rural communities thrive.

"The momentum behind the program over the past four years demonstrates just how important these organizations are to the communities they call home," said Andrea McConnell, senior manager of customer solutions with BASF Agricultural Solutions Canada. "This community-inspired initiative has allowed BASF to support people and the places that are near and dear to them."

HOW TO NOMINATE A COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Step 1: Submit a nomination

BASF customers are invited to nominate a local organization that makes a difference in their community. As part of the nomination form, participants are asked to submit a short write-up explaining why the organization deserves to win and how it positively impacts the community. Nominations must be submitted by Feb. 28, 2026.

Step 2: Boost your chances

Nominees can increase their organization's chances of success by earning up to 25 additional entries, with details provided during the nomination process.

Step 3: Get ready for voting

A panel will select three finalist organizations per province, which will be announced March 31, 2026. Public voting will then be open to all Canadians from March 31 to April 17, with winners announced April 28.

Twelve organizations will share the

\$160,000 prize fund, with awards broken down by province: four first-place prizes of \$25,000, four second-place prizes of \$10,000 and four third-place prizes of \$5,000.

Since launching in 2023, the Growing Home with BASF program has distributed \$335,000 to 19 organizations across the four provinces. Last year's Manitoba first-place funding supported the Boissevain School Parent Advisory Council Playground Committee, helping advance plans for an inclusive and accessible school playground.

BASF officials say the program's success is driven by farmers who take the time to nominate local groups and encourage community participation during the voting phase.

More information, including the nomination form and full program criteria, is available at agsolutions.ca/growinghome

Manitoba increases school funding by \$79.8M for 2026-27

By Haley Cvar

The Manitoba government is increasing public school funding by \$79.8 million for the 2026-27 school year, bringing the province's total education investment to nearly \$2 billion, Education and Early Childhood Minister Tracy Schmidt announced.

The funding represents a 3.5 per cent increase over the previous year and is intended to help school divisions manage enrolment changes and rising costs, while maintaining the province's funding formula guarantee. The guarantee ensures every division receives an increase over its 2025-26 allocation.

Schmidt said the additional funding will support stable public schools and address student needs across the province.

"Our government is committed to making sure every Manitoba family can count on strong, stable public schools, year after year," she said in a statement.

As part of the increase, the province is allocating \$11.4 million to support school divisions most affected by teacher salary harmonization, which will be implemented in the 2026-27 school year. The harmonization process standardizes teacher pay scales across divisions to reduce wage disparities.

Manitoba School Boards Association president Alan Campbell said

the funding commitment is a positive step but noted ongoing work is needed to fully address system pressures.

"School boards recognize that the funding contribution for harmonization announced today is a step in the right direction," Campbell said. "We look forward to continuing our work with government to ensure funding fully meets the needs of students, staff and communities across Manitoba."

Total provincial school funding for 2026-27 will reach \$1.995 billion. The allocation includes:

- a \$51-million increase to help public schools manage operating costs, including investments in salary harmonization and technical vocational education;
- \$30 million for a universal school nutrition program and the implementation of Nello's Law, which protects the program, along with an additional \$3 million from the sale of U.S. alcohol products for the Children's Nutrition Council;

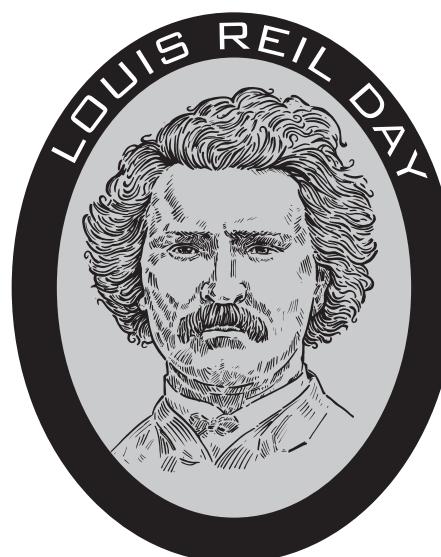
- a \$15.2-million increase in capital support, including principal and interest costs related to school construction; and
- a \$16.6-million increase in funding for independent schools under the provincial funding agreement.

The province also confirmed it remains on track to build four new schools, including Devonshire Park and Prairie Point in Winnipeg, Mead-

owlands in West St. Paul and a new school in southwest Brandon.

More information on Manitoba's

school funding model is available through the provincial education department.



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Snow sculptor brings winter art to Stony Mountain

By E. Antonio

People are slowing their steps outside the Stony Mountain Community Centre this winter, drawn to a completed hockey scene carved from packed snow.

The large-scale sculpture, created by local artist Jordan LeSage from a 4-by-11-by-8-foot block of snow, has already begun attracting attention from residents passing through the area.

"It's an impressive piece," said Donna Tarashchuk, noting the number of people who have stopped to admire the finished work.

Now in his eighth year of snow sculpting, LeSage said creativity has always been part of who he is. As a student, art was one of his favourite outlets, though it took years — and a few unexpected influences — before he returned to it in a serious way.

Before beginning his full-time career with Manitoba Hydro, LeSage travelled frequently to Mexico and the Caribbean, where he encountered young artists making a living from their work.

"Not too many people my age do that (art) for a living," he said. "That's what really got me fired up about pursuing art again."

That spark eventually followed him north to Gillam, where LeSage lived for several years. One winter, a neighbour built a snow sculpture, and LeSage asked to learn the basics. He soon put those skills to use when his father came to visit.

Despite frigid temperatures and less-than-ideal snow conditions, the pair packed snow bricks using cardboard boxes and carved a snowman standing more than five feet tall.

"It turned out to be the most perfect snowman after carving," LeSage said. "We received a ton of compliments, and that made me wonder — what more can I create?"

Since then, LeSage has carved one sculpture each winter, including a polar bear, a sphinx, an Easter Island head, the Colosseum, the Taj Mahal and the Eiffel Tower. After moving back to Stony Mountain this past summer to be closer to family, he felt the pull to carve again — this time at home.

With approval from the town, LeSage chose the Stony Mountain Community Centre as his canvas, citing both its steady foot traffic and the shelter it provides from direct sunlight.

"It is the absolute perfect space," he said.

Unlike previous projects that focused on architectural forms, this year's sculpture marks a shift. LeSage challenged himself to carve a scene — a hockey moment frozen in time — rather than a standalone structure.

The project took about three weeks to complete, including roughly 16 hours of shovelling and packing snow by hand and another 16 hours of carving



Jordan LeSage and his father, Larry, pose with the first snow sculpture they created in Gillam eight years ago.

once the design was finalized. Planning alone, he said, typically takes about 10 hours.

To build the sculpture, LeSage constructs a large wooden box, shovels in snow one foot at a time, jumps inside to pack it down, allows it to freeze and repeats the process until the form is solid. Once complete, he removes the lumber and begins carving.

After stencilling the design, he uses a machete and drywall tools to shape the piece layer by layer. Mostly self-taught, LeSage said there is no single correct way to carve snow — a lesson reinforced when he observed other sculptors at Festival du Voyageur.

"It looks like we're all just making whatever we have work," he said. "I think that's part of the fun."

LeSage does much of his carving in the evenings, even during brutally cold conditions — weather he said he prefers.

"It's so quiet and calm outside as the snow is falling," he said. "It's peaceful being the only one outdoors. Most people hate the cold, but me — I love it."

Choosing a favourite sculpture is impossible, he said, because each year's project improves on the last. While he hopes to continue the winter sports theme in future carvings at the community centre, he knows each sculpture has a limited lifespan.

"It makes you laugh as it begins to look sadder and sadder," he said. "But it's nice to see Mother Nature do her work and take it away. It's calming."

For LeSage, the temporary nature of snow art is part of its meaning — a reminder that creation doesn't need to last forever to matter.

He encourages anyone curious about snow sculpt-



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Stony Mountain artist Jordan LeSage stands beside the hockey-themed snow sculpture he carved outside the Stony Mountain Community Centre. His son is pictured with him.



LeSage poses with his wife, Yansiri Alejandro Gonzalez, and their son in front of his snow sculpture inspired by Paris's Eiffel Tower.

ing to give it a try.

"One small brick can open the door to so many creations," he said. "The possibilities are endless."

Two women die in Highway 8 head-on collision

By Lana Meier

Two women have died following a head-on collision on Highway 8 in the RM of St. Andrews.

Selkirk RCMP said officers were called to the scene near Whytewold

Road at approximately 12:10 p.m. on Jan. 27.

Police said a vehicle travelling southbound on Highway 8 collided head-on with a northbound vehicle.

The driver of the northbound ve-

hicle, a 26-year-old woman from the RM of Gimli, was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver of the southbound vehicle, a 20-year-old woman from Winnipeg Beach, was taken to hospital, where she later died from her injuries.

Selkirk RCMP, along with a forensic collision reconstructionist and the Criminal Collision Investigation Team, continue to investigate the cause of the crash.

Manitoba youth highlight global partnerships at IDW

By E. Antonio

Manitoba students, international development leaders and provincial and federal officials gathered at the Manitoba legislature Monday to mark the launch of the 36th annual International Development Week (IDW), highlighting youth voices and global partnerships focused on building a more just and sustainable world.

Hosted by Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister Tracy Schmidt, the event brought together youth advocates, global changemakers, elected officials and community leaders for the opening of the week-long initiative organized by the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC).

Federal Secretary of State for International Development Randeep Sarai addressed attendees, speaking to this year's theme, Prosperity Through Partnership, and emphasizing the importance of collaboration across borders to address global challenges.

A central feature of the launch was the debut performance of What We're Meant to Be, a spoken-word poem created and performed by three Manitoba high school students — Tobilola (Tobi) Olorunsola of Brandon and Fawwaz (Ali) Al Hassan and Sami Suliman of Winnipeg.

The students, all recent newcomers to Canada, explored themes of genocide, oppression and displacement, reflecting on injustice and resilience through personal and global perspectives.

"Stay home. Stay quiet. Stay invisible," Al Hassan recited in the piece, reflecting on the experiences of girls denied access to education. Olorunsola evoked loss and longing, saying "Dust falls from them like small ghosts," while Suliman delivered a message of hope, reminding audiences that "Even in broken places, love refuses to die."

The performance was developed through MCIC's annual Voices for Change program under the mentorship of Manitoba spoken-word artist Steve Locke and was released as a YouTube video to coincide with International Development Week.

While reciting at the Manitoba legislature, the students received a standing ovation and "moved guests to tears," said MCIC public engagement specialist Grace Van Mil.

"Youth bring this new energy and passion into the work we do," she said. "It's an opportunity to help them understand their actions and advocacy matter while striving to make the world a better place."

Van Mil — who currently lives near

Gimli and formerly resided in Rosser and Selkirk — said it is MCIC's and IDW's mission to help Manitobans understand what it means to be a global citizen and recognize that local actions can have a global impact.

"Our main vision is a just world," she said. "We work to create change locally by engaging Manitobans and encouraging the sustainable world we are striving for."

"International Development Week reminds us that true prosperity is built through partnership, by working together across borders to create opportunity, resilience and a just world," said MCIC executive director Janice Hamilton.

MCIC is a coalition of more than 40 Manitoba-based organizations that supports hundreds of international projects worldwide. Last year alone, through the Manitoba government matching grant program, the organization distributed \$1.25 million to 57 projects focused on social justice, the environment, education and other global priorities. MCIC also offers learning opportunities, workshops and conferences throughout the year, including during IDW, which is celebrated annually during the first full week of February.

Since 1991, Global Affairs Canada has led International Development Week alongside provincial councils and organizations, recognizing contributions to international development and cooperation.

"It's clear to Canadians that we are all in this together," Van Mil added. "We are all part of a global community helping each other learn, grow, innovate and solve problems, giving us all a better chance to thrive."

She noted that especially in small towns, residents understand the power of collective action, saying time and again, unity leads to progress.

MCIC also presented its 2026 Development Impact Award to World Vision Canada, in partnership with World Vision Sri Lanka, recognizing their Gender-Transformative Approach for Health, Food Security and Climate Resilience project in Sri Lanka. The initiative combined fuel-efficient cookstoves with women-led home and community gardens, while engaging men and boys as partners in advancing gender equality.

"This is just one example of the incredible work Manitobans have supported," Van Mil said. "It truly shows we have the chance to make meaningful impacts."

The project reached 274 participants, reduced household firewood use by 56 per cent, increased women's



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

World Vision Canada representatives accept the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation's 2026 Development Impact Award at the launch of International Development Week at the Manitoba Legislature. From left: Abdal Qeshta (MCIC), Crystal Penner, Secretary of State for International Development Randeep Sarai, Chris Schroeder and Divya Sharma.



Fawwaz (Ali) Al Hassan, Sami Suliman and Tobilola (Tobi) Olorunsola perform a spoken-word piece during the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation's launch of International Development Week at the Manitoba legislature.

participation in community leadership from zero to 69 per cent, and significantly improved food security through expanded local gardening.

"Now it's different. It only takes a little wood to light the stove," said Malani, a tea estate worker whose household became a model for community change. "I could even say it's better than a gas stove. Now I get to spend more time with my family."

Van Mil said the project addressed both immediate and long-term needs by combining practical solutions, such as fuel-efficient stoves, with lasting social transformation, including

increased leadership opportunities for women.

"Once you improve life for your daughters — such as more time in school because less wood needs to be collected for stoves — they will be able to improve life for their future families and the community as a whole."

To learn more about MCIC or get involved, visit www.mcic.ca.

"We are all global citizens. Our actions matter, and Manitobans can make a difference when we come together," Van Mil added.

Joy Billings' work centres faith, vulnerability and resilience

By Lana Meier

Joy Billings brings emotional honesty to the Nine Perspectives exhibition.

For Garden Candy artist Joy Billings, showing work in *Nine Perspectives* marks both a professional milestone and a deeply personal turning point in her artistic practice.

Billings is one of nine rural and northern Manitoba artists participating in the group exhibition opening Saturday, Jan. 17 at 210 Gallery in Winnipeg. Her three-piece series, *Symphony of Psalms* (143, 147 and 104), reflects what she describes as the most emotionally authentic body of work she has created to date.

The largest piece in the series, 143, was inspired by Psalm 143:8 and developed through a year-long, open-ended process that was completed during the six-month mentorship program connected to the exhibition. Billings said the verse became a prayer and lifeline during periods of uncertainty, anxiety and depression and remains posted on the wall of her studio.

The layered work traces themes of loneliness, confusion, shame and spiritual dissonance, while gradually shifting toward a more hopeful perspective. Billings described the piece as a cry for help that slowly uncovers compassion, unconditional love and peace as space is held through wait-

ing.

The second work, 147, draws inspiration from Psalm 147:9 and explores faith, humility and trust during seasons of vulnerability and helplessness. Created during a financially difficult period for her family, Billings said the piece carries both spiritual and literal meaning, reflecting her growing acceptance of self and confidence beyond productivity or accomplishment.

Her third piece, 104, inspired by Psalm 104:16, centres on themes of provision, gratitude and care, and the ways love becomes tangible through the presence and support of family and friends during times of need.

Billings said the series represents a significant shift in her practice, as emotional vulnerability has taken precedence over perfectionism or saleability. Long challenged by the pressure to create polished, market-ready work, she said this body of work marks a step out of hiding and into her voice as an artist.

Living and working as a rural artist continues to shape her creative process. A self-described prairie farm girl, Billings said the sky and horizon line have always been grounding influences, reminding her she is part of a larger, carefully crafted world. Two of the three works in the series are based on photographs taken on her



EXPRESS PHOTO BY MELODY MUELLER

Garden Candy artist Joy Billings is pictured with work from her three-piece series *Symphony of Psalms* (143, 147 and 104), featured in the *Nine Perspectives* exhibition at 210 Gallery in Winnipeg.

own property.

Working from a home studio converted from her former dining room after the COVID-19 pandemic, she said, has helped her claim space for her practice. As an introvert, Billings said solitude nourishes her creativity, while time spent gardening or walking the land informs her thinking and artistic direction.

The mentorship program associated with the exhibition arrived at a piv-

otal moment. Billings said she was seriously considering stepping away from her practice when she applied, and the experience helped reaffirm that she was on the right path.

Beyond creative guidance, she said the program provided critical dialogue, community and external perspective that are often missing in rural life. Group critiques and peer

Continued on page 13

Celebrating 55 years of denture services in Manitoba

By Elisha Vandor

This year we are celebrating our 55th year as a family-owned and operated business. We are so grateful to serve Winnipeg, Selkirk and the surrounding areas with trusted quality denture care for you, our patients, who often become feeling more like family. Certainly, our favourite part of what we do is helping people get their smile back, starting from first greets and finishing with full smiles, happy handshakes, hugging and sometimes tears of joy. We love seeing all the smile transformations throughout the years, but most importantly witnessing how an excellent denture can improve someone's life is truly why we passionately do what we do, as Denturists.

The beginning of January is often just as busy for us as December because dental insurance renews and people wait all year to receive dentures for the first time or upgrade from their current ones. Jo-Ann was one of those people who

had been eagerly waiting for her final denture (supported by dental implants) to be finished. When she walked out of the room with her new teeth in and smiled at me, she looked happy, confident and comfortable. She said, "from the minute I first walked in, the staff were very friendly. Brock was very informative about the implant procedure and the end result of going through with this is fantastic. I am no longer embarrassed to smile as my new dentures look so natural."

Our talented Denturist Matthew, who's been with us for the past 9 years, seeing patients for almost ten hours a day, has the ability to make you feel like you've known him for years all the while creating your perfect smile, it's an art and his patient truly love coming to see him. Jackie came to see Matthew at the end of last year for a consultation needing to transition to an upper denture for the first time. When she received her denture in January, she

said, "my experience with Matthew at Vandor clinic was amazing. Everyone there made the process so great. Highly recommend Vandor Denture Clinic. Thank you for everything."

As featured in the picture, Lorene's smile transformation was full of happy tears as she gleamed with her very own recreated 'Farrah Fawcett' smile saying she felt beautiful and confident again, after even being called ugly without teeth. Brock was able to create dentures that replicated Lorene's desire to have the perfect Farrah Fawcett smile by mimicking the shape, size and way the teeth aligned, which matched Lorene's look perfectly.

If you think it's time for new dentures, filling the gaps in your smile or upgrading to a dental implant supported denture, then call us today. We can direct bill to your insurance and accept the Canadian Dental Care Plan. We look forward to seeing you soon!



Lorene, pictured with Denturist Brock, is gleaming with her CNC milled dentures supported by dental implants.

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> BILLINGS', FROM PG. 12

discussions strengthened her confidence and professionalism, helping her articulate her ideas more clearly while also providing practical tools related to artist statements, curriculum vitae development and pricing strategies within the local art market.

For Billings, a sustainable art practice means protecting herself from burnout while allowing space for play, experimentation, rest and reflection. While details remain important in her work, she said they cannot come at the expense of intuition, growth or self-compassion.

She hopes viewers encounter her paintings as more than images, describing them as emotional presences that invite reflection and connection. Her work, she said, holds complexity rather than resolution — struggle alongside beauty, darkness alongside light — and aims to create a sense of safety and being held.

Looking ahead, Billings said the exhibition has affirmed the importance of fully embracing emotional intensity in her work. She plans to explore both smaller, intricately nuanced abstractions and larger, more immersive pieces that continue to explore the tension between vulnerability and hope through layering and texture.

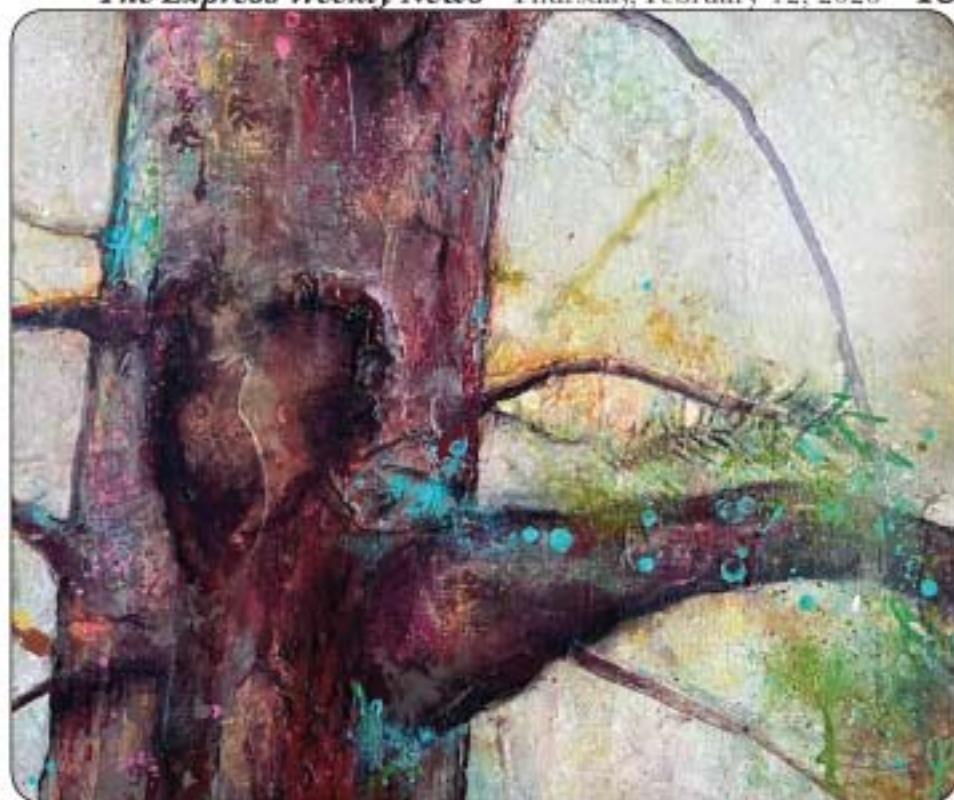
Billings' work is featured as part of *Nine Perspectives*, a group exhibition developed through a six-month mentorship and exhibition program led by artist and educator Jordan Miller. The program supported nine artists from rural and northern Manitoba in developing cohesive bodies of work, strengthening professional presentation and building confidence for gallery exhibition.

The exhibition highlights a range of materials and approaches while emphasizing clarity of practice, sustainability and professional readiness. Artists participated in guided webinars, group critiques and mentorship sessions focused on audience development, branding, pricing and writing professional artist materials.

In addition to the exhibition, Billings' work is currently on display at Fryday's Restaurant and Lounge in Teulon.

Nine Perspectives runs from until Feb. 21 at 210 Gallery, located at 210 Princess St. in Winnipeg. Gallery hours are Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from noon to 5 p.m.

More information about the exhibition is available at www.manitobaartsnetwork.ca, and Billings' work can also be viewed on Instagram at @gardencandy.



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Long-standing mural continues to honour memory of local man

By Jennifer McFee

A lasting legacy remains on display through a colourful mural to honour the life of well-respected local man.

Twenty years ago, Ed Barnes died in a tragic accident that sent ripples of grief through the community. In his memory, a mural was painted in Stonewall on the north elevation of the building at 380 Main St., and it remains there to this day.

Ed and Barbara Barnes grew up in Ashern and married in 1967. Five years later, they moved to Stonewall when their son Sean was starting kindergarten and daughter Shannon was still in diapers. Ed travelled to Resolute Bay in the Northwest Territories, as well as Ottawa and Saskatoon, to train to be an air traffic controller before landing a position in Winnipeg and settling in Stonewall.

"My father was very involved in the community from minor hockey, curling, the Kinsmen Club and eventually serving on town council for eight years and was deputy mayor. He was instrumental in the creation of Quarry Park and the interpretive centre. This was something that he was very proud of," Sean said.

"My father was an entrepreneur and started several small businesses including Frosty's and the Village Bake Shop. He acquired the highways building, which eventually became Quarry Furnishings and now Talbots, where the mural was located decades ago — so long, in fact, that we had dif-



EXPRESS PHOTO BY LANA MEIER

A colourful mural on the north wall of the building at 380 Main St. continues to honour the life and legacy of longtime Stonewall resident Ed Barnes, depicting his love of community, family and the outdoors nearly two decades after his death.

ficulty finding the records of the original purchase after my mother passed away in 2024."

Over time, when Sean and Shannon moved out, Ed and Barbara moved from their home on 9th Avenue South, adjacent to 5th Avenue and Highway 67, to an acreage on Winfield Road as empty-nesters.

"My parents loved to travel and had an RV, and my father was an avid fisherman. He also dabbled in landscaping and land development to keep himself occupied," Sean said.

"He retired as an air traffic controller and decided to learn how to drive a big rig truck so that he could travel and get paid for it in retirement. He built a pre-engineered storage building on his property to hold all of his toys and equipment."

On April 25, 2005, Ed was supervising the construction of his storage building with trailer loads of gravel

being delivered for the base. He was 58 years old at the time.

"While a trailer was lifting a load to dump, it was partially frozen and tipped over unbalanced, landing on top of him. He had just retired and it was a horrific time in our family history. He had so much more to live for and planned to do. His funeral had to be held in the old arena, and it really showed us how much dad meant to the community," said Sean, who is now 59.

"A year or two after my father's passing, my mother Barb decided to commission a mural on the side of the Quarry Furnishings building at 380 Main St. to celebrate the life of my late father and highlight some of the things that he loved. The artist is Jennifer Mosienko from Winnipeg and she did a great job."

The artist sat down with Barbara to learn Ed's story and worked with her

to create a mural that depicted the things that were important to him — community, family and friendship.

"My dad absolutely loved Lake of the Woods. They had a houseboat on the lake that they shared with two other families in Stonewall. In the mural is a rear-facing Ed looking over the lake at his houseboat. He would get up early in the mornings and follow the totem lodge boats to their fishing spots and highlight them on a map to check out later. I have that map to this day," he said.

"Quarry Park is prominently featured in the mural, along with Kinsmen Lake. The two kids playing in the sand are my children — Ed and Barb's grandchildren — Mitchell and Kendall, who are adults now. The dogs in the picture were my late sister Shannon's dogs, which my mother adored. The hospital was built while my dad was a councillor, and the curling club renovated. The other building is the pet shop building, which my parents owned for many years on Main Street."

When the family sold the building at 380 Main St., Sean offered to maintain the mural at his own cost in the hopes that it would remain a part of the townscape.

"My parents loved Stonewall. They were very active socially in town, and I have so many memories of their friends coming by the house or all of us visiting others in town. I stay in touch with many of my parents' friends to this day, which means a great deal to me. My dad was a friend to so many people in the community," Sean said.

"He had a great sense of humour and a strong engagement to contribute to the success of his community. I am proud to be an Interlaker — and an Interlaker from Stonewall. And I get that from my parents. It's part of what defines a person — our hometown and the people within it. My parents grew up in Ashern, moved to Stonewall in their early 20s and never left."

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- 10AM** Bonfire begins (The Breakwater Path)
- 12PM** Craft and Vendor Market (Boardwalk Station)
- 12PM** Mini Golf BOGO (Boardwalk Station)
- 12PM** Fire On Ice Car Racing Practice
(On the Lake by the Boardwalk)
- 1PM** Horse Drawn Sleigh Rides (Community Centre)
- 1-2PM** Skating Contest (Community Centre)
- 2-7PM** Family Skate (Community Centre)
- 4PM** Valentines Day Dinner (Midnight Anchored)
- 5PM and 6PM** Lakeside Lions Meat Draw
- 5:30PM** Mitchell Stewart Band LIVE (Midnight Anchored)
- 7:30PM** Valentine Social (Legion)

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 15th

- 9AM** Pancake Breakfast (Community Centre)
- 1-5PM** Sticks N Pucks (Community Centre)
- 12PM** Fire On Ice Car Racing (On the Lake by the Boardwalk)
- 1PM** Line Dancing Lessons (Community Centre)
- 5 and 6PM** Lakeside Lions Meat Draws (Midnight Anchored)

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Winnipeg Beach's Wonderful Winter Weekend promises glowing good times

Celebrate love and win a wagonload of liquor at the legion

By Patricia Barrett

The Town of Winnipeg Beach's annual Wonderful Winter Weekend is offering a number of fun events to help locals and visitors fight the frosty side effects of a seemingly perdurable Manitoba winter.

The party gets into swing on Friday,

Feb. 13 with some visually striking physical diversions.

A Glow Skate from 7 to 9 p.m. will be held at the Winnipeg Beach Community Centre where people can twirl to the music and win prizes. And a Glow Curling Bonspiel at the curling club down the street will feature an illuminating family-friendly bonspiel with prizes for the best glow outfits.

On Saturday, Feb. 14 a Wonderful Winter Weekend Market from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. will be held at the community centre and feature locally made crafts and food. And a pop-up winter

market will be held inside Boardwalk Station at 38 Main St. and feature crafts, fabric jewelry, honey and more.

The Winnipeg Beach Royal Canadian Legion Branch #61 is never short of ideas and events that bring lasting joy to the community and hit the sweet spot.

The legion is hosting a Saturday night full of romance with a chance for lovebirds to win big prizes during its Valentine's Wonderful Weekend Social.

People can renew their love or perhaps find a new one. And if love fails, there's always perogies to feast on, wagonloads of liquor to be won along with a champagne-infused stay at South Beach Casino across the lake.

The legion's entertainment, ways and means committee chair Comrade. Lorraine Andruschuk said they'll have it all, including local musicians from between "here and Arborg."

"We'll be having perogies and a live band called the Rock Pickers, who are just wonderful. They cover '60s rock and polka music," said Andruschuk. "We're also having door prizes and a night in South Beach [Casino] with a very expensive bottle of champagne. And there's a wagonload of liquor

that going to be raffled off."

Andruschuk said she's letting her two decorators "have their own way," which means attendees will find chocolates and suckers on their tables.

The social will run at the legion at 20 Hamilton Ave. from 7:30 p.m. to midnight on Saturday with tickets for only \$15.

For more mature audiences, Madeline's Closet will host a Naughty Bingo on Saturday at the community centre. It includes a lasagna dinner.

On Sunday, Feb. 15, the community centre will play host to a breakfast with Elsa and Anna from Disney's animated film *Frozen*. It will feature glitter tattoos and face painting by artist Jayne Jones of Unplain Jayne Face Painting.

As part of the festival, the Winnipeg Sports Car Club's Fire on Ice racing will be heating up Lake Winnipeg with a Saturday morning ice school for newbie racers followed by ice drifting and lapping. On Sunday, drivers can practise in the morning followed by racing at noon.

For more information about festival events and official times, visit the Town of Winnipeg Beach's website.

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Just got engaged and ready to start planning your big day? Organizing a wedding is exciting, but it also requires you to make a lot of decisions. Here are five key things to keep in mind.

1. SET A BUDGET

Start by deciding how much you're willing to spend on the event. You don't need an exact figure right away, but you should try to estimate costs for essentials like the venue, cake, dresses and suits.

2. CHOOSE AN OFFICIANT

Depending on whether you want a civil or religious ceremony, you'll have

to hire someone who is legally authorized to declare you married. This could be a priest, a notary or even a family member who obtains the proper authorization.

3. SEND OUT INVITATIONS

Whether you send your invitations by post or email, get them out as soon as possible. Ideally, you should do this at least four months before the wedding. This will help you confirm the number of place settings, chairs and other arrangements that need to be provided on the big day.

4. PLAN THE MENU

One of the keys to a successful wed-

ding is undoubtedly serving good food. Take the time to explore your catering options. Some caterers, for example, offer complete buffet menus that include vegetarian or lactose-free dishes.

5. BOOK AN ENTERTAINER OR MUSICIAN

Music sets the tone for the celebration. Depending on your budget and preferences, hire a DJ or live band to play appropriate music at the ceremony, cocktail hour and reception. Always ask for references from satisfied customers before booking.



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EIWD co-hosting free 101 sessions on regenerative agriculture and funding opportunities

By Patricia Barrett

With rising interest among farmers and landowners in regenerative agricultural (regen ag) practices, the East Interlake Watershed District (EIWD) is co-hosting upcoming sessions on funding programs that are available to help people transition to improved land-management practices.

In conjunction with the West Interlake Watershed District and the Redboine Watershed District, the EIWD is offering "101 sessions" on regen ag in Arborg, Stonewall and Warren.

Farmers and landowners can learn more about regen ag practices that include rotational grazing, cover cropping, nitrogen management, water management, erosion control, tree planting, shelter belts and water retention, as well as about available funding of up to 85 per cent to establish a project.

Kathleen Melnychuk, the EIWD's regenerative agriculture coordinator, is helping organize the sessions and is a practitioner of regen ag.

Regen ag can "mean something different" on each farm and that's why it's so important and impactful for Interlake farmers to consider adopting some or all of its guiding principles.

"There are five main principles to regen ag: minimizing disturbance, maintaining a living root, keeping the soil covered, increasing diversity and integrating livestock," said Melnychuk. "Using one or more of these practices on the farm can help with numerous benefits including increases to crop yield, water infiltration and biodiversity, improvements to soil structure and hydric properties, and reductions to water pollution, erosion, parasite pressure, weed growth,

leaching and greenhouse gas emissions."

Watershed districts are grassroots organizations composed of municipalities that preserve and enhance the environment and which partner with higher levels of government. The EIWD, which was formed in 2005, is composed of Armstrong, Bifrost-Riverton, Fisher, Gimli, Grahamdale, Rockwood, Rosser, St. Andrews, West St. Paul, Woodlands, Arborg, Stonewall, Teulon, Winnipeg Beach, Dunnottar and Selkirk.

The reward of adopting regen ag practices, whether in varying degrees or in combination, is improvement to land and more money in a farmers' coffers.

Melnychuk and her husband, Mike, own and operate Stoney Acre Farms in Fraserwood where they've put regen ag to the test. They produce strawberries, pumpkins and other squash, as well as sweet and ornamental corn. They sell their produce directly to consumers.

"We strongly believe in 'from field to fork' and supporting our local producers. We have been slowly implementing various practices of regen ag onto our operation. We have been dabbling in some cover crop mixes, moved away from broadcasting fertilizer and upgraded our seeder to allow for in-row banding of fertilizer (when needed). We have changed our fertilizers to use manure. Based on our soil tests, we have been able to reduce our synthetic fertilizer inputs," said Melnychuk.

"One of our largest projects has been our water-retention project as we are trying to keep as much water on our property as possible to help



EXPRESS FILE PHOTO BY CARL DURAND

Futura Farms owner Carl Durand planted thousands of prairie-hardy trees on his St. Andrews property with grant funding from the East Interlake Watershed District.

with drought assistance on the farm as we do need to irrigate some of our crops. We also installed a 6,000-tree shelterbelt in our field and further increased the buffer area and other areas throughout the farm by seeding native tall grasses and flowering species to increase pollinator species, reduce pest pressure, reduce weed growth and so much more."

Trying out some regen ag practices on a few acres rather than an entire farm is a good way for farmers to experiment. And Melnychuk said the producer is ultimately the one to decide what principles to implement and to what extent — which is the sixth principle of regen ag. There are some upfront costs to taking on a regen ag project, but a farmer should recoup those costs in the long run.

"Trying something new on a few acres is a lot less scary than trying something new across the whole farm. While there are upfront costs to any of these practices, ultimately, the

producer will see their money back in the long-run," said Melnychuk. "Funding through the Prairie Watershed Climate Program for regen ag is a gateway to help farmers in a try-before-you-buy system that will encourage them to take on more regenerative practices in the future. While talking with producers across the Interlake about regen ag programs, we have also been able to include producers into other funding that the EIWD can provide to producers and landowners."

Interest in the Prairie Watershed Climate Program among Interlake farmers has been well received, with over \$3 million delivered to producers in the EIWD since the start of the program in 2022, she said.

"We are already planning and have projects lined up for the 2026 season. If there are producers that are interested in cover crop, nitrogen management or rotational grazing funding, I would suggest getting an application in as soon as possible," she said. "We do have other funding options that producers can also take part in, when we receive your application, we will make sure that we get you fitted into the right program for your project. Applications are accepted throughout the year."

The free regen ag 101 sessions will take place in Arborg on Feb. 19 at 6 p.m. in the Arborg-Bifrost Community Hall, in Stonewall on Feb. 26 at 6 p.m. at the SIAS Red Barn, and in Warren on Feb. 27 at 1 p.m. in the Warren Multipurpose Building.

To register for the sessions, contact Kathleen Melnychuk by email at k.melnychuk@eastinterlake.ca or phone 204-642-7578, or contact Jennifer Hunnie by email at Jennifer@redboine.com or phone 204-526-4223.

For more information about funding and programs, email the EIWD at info@eastinterlake.ca or call 204-642-7578.

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Calvert claims first Manitoba men's title at Bunge Championship

By Haley Cvar

Manitoba has a new men's curling champion.

Braden Calvert and his Heather Curling Club rink captured the Bunge Championship title Sunday afternoon in Selkirk, defeating Jordon McDonald of the Assiniboine Memorial Curling Club in an extra end to earn their first Manitoba men's crown.

Calvert, joined by third Corey Chambers, second Kyle Kurz, lead Brendan Bilawka and alternate Rob Gordon, prevailed in a dramatic rematch of Saturday night's Page 1-2 playoff game, also won by the Heather rink.

The championship final was tied 7-7 after 10 ends when Calvert slid a foot deep on his last-stone draw, conceding a single point to force an extra end. In the 11th, Calvert set up the winning chance with a perfect first-stone hit, leaving McDonald facing a difficult draw around two centre-line stones. McDonald made the shot but left Calvert a short runback, which he converted to seal the win and the right to represent Manitoba at the national championship.

For Calvert and his teammates, the victory marked a breakthrough after falling short in the past two provincial finals — losing to Reid Carruthers in 2025 and Brad Jacobs in 2024.

McDonald's rink, which includes Jacques Gauthier, Elias Huminicki and Cam Olafson, reached the final earlier Sunday with a six-end semi-final win over Brett Walter's Assiniboine Memorial team.

While the loss was difficult, Huminicki said the experience gained through the playoff run will be valuable moving forward.

"It was definitely tough losing our provincial with this new team we are so confident in," he said. "But looking at the result makes me realize that

sometimes, even though we practiced so much and had so much confidence coming into the provincial, experience takes teams a long way."

Huminicki said Calvert's rink benefited from lessons learned through previous championship defeats.

"That is why I believe we fell short," he said. "We did everything right, but Team Calvert has had numerous provincial final losses in the past, and the experience from that led to them overcoming our team's performance. That's why I have a lot of respect for them winning against us that night."

He added the run has strengthened his team's resolve heading into next season.

"Now that we've had that experience of going deep into an event with a prize of going to the Brier, we'll be more prepared and stronger than ever going into it next year," Huminicki said.

The result capped a week that guaranteed a new provincial champion. Defending champion and top seed Reid Carruthers and his Granite Curling Club rink were eliminated Saturday afternoon by Kelly Marnoch's Carberry foursome, opening the door for a first-time men's champion.

None of the three teams remaining heading into the final day — Calvert, McDonald and Walter — had previously represented Manitoba at the Canadian men's championship, though several players had won provincial titles at the junior, U18 or mixed levels.

Calvert earned his spot in Sunday's final by edging McDonald 8-7 in the Page 1-2 playoff Saturday evening. McDonald led 5-3 at the mid-game break but surrendered five points over the next four ends. Facing a McDonald stone on the button in the 10th, Calvert executed a near-perfect freeze, limiting McDonald to a single



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY BRETT MITCHELL

Braden Calvert (left) poses with third Corey Chambers, second Kyle Kurz, lead Brendan Bilawka and alternate Rob Gordon after capturing the Bunge Championship title Sunday in Selkirk. The Heather Curling Club rink claimed its first Manitoba men's crown with an extra-end win in the final and will represent the province at the Montana's Brier in St. John's, N.L.



Team Grassie, including Justin Richter, Tyler Drews (pictured above), Daryl Evans, Jordan Johnson and Rodney Legault, were three and three.



Tanner Lott and his team, including Riley Smith, Adam Flatt, Sean Flatt and Justin Twiss, finished the week with three wins and three losses.

point.

Huminicki said the McDonald rink remained focused after that loss, using the setback as a learning opportunity.

"After losing the 1-2 page game, we had a long debrief of everything that went right and wrong," he said. "We

Continued on page 23



Team Carruthers with Reid Carruthers, BJ Neufeld, Catlin Schneider, Connor Njegovan and Kyle Doering lost out in the playoffs to McDonald and Marnoch.



Elias Huminicki delivers a stone during Manitoba men's curling championship action Sunday at the Selkirk Rec Centre, with sweepers Jacques Gauthier (left) and Cam Olafson. The Jordon McDonald rink reached the final of the Bunge Championship before falling to Braden Calvert's Heather Curling Club team in an extra end.

1920 Falcons, New Iceland heritage displayed at Winnipeg Jets game

By Kieran Reimer

With the 2026 Winter Olympic Games now underway in Milan and Cortina, Manitobans — and Gimli residents in particular — are reflecting on the legacy of a team that became the first Olympic gold medalists in men's ice hockey.

The 1920 Winnipeg Falcons were the first team to represent Canada in men's ice hockey, competing at the Antwerp 1920 Summer Games.

The roster was made up of Canadian-Icelanders Allan Woodman, Konrad Johannesson, Hallie Halderson, Mike Goodman, Chris Fridfinnson, Bobby Benson, Frank Frederickson and Walter Byron, who helped found the team in the early 1900s.

Before defeating fellow hockey powerhouses Czechoslovakia, the United States and Sweden to capture Olympic gold, the entire team had enlisted in the First World War. Teammates Frank Thorsteinson and George Cumbers were among the war's casualties.

Following the team's return in 1919, the eight-player squad returned to the ice for the Allan Cup and Olympic competition, with several players later going on to National Hockey League careers.

In the 106 years since, Canada has added another eight Olympic men's hockey gold medals to its record, with hopes of adding another in the coming days.

Before Canadians turned their attention to Italy in 2026, the 1920 Falcons were honoured Feb. 4 during a Winnipeg Jets-Montreal Canadiens game, designated Falcons/New Iceland 150 Tribute Night at Canada Life Centre.

Family members of three different Falcons players were in attendance for the special evening.

"It was very gratifying. I had no idea what kind of numbers to expect," said Rod Palson, a local Icelander who attended the event. "I didn't know if we'd expect five people or 105 people."



Lisa Johannson Maloney, Jeff Palson, Leif Palson, Debbie Palson, Rod Palson, Lindsey Prise, Gwen Palson and Sadie Prise.



The 1920 Winnipeg Falcons consisting of local Canadian-Icelanders Allan Woodman, Konrad Johannesson, Hallie Halderson, Mike Goodman, Chris Fridfinnson, Bobby Benson, Frank Frederickson and Walter Byron became the first Olympic men's ice hockey gold medallists at the Antwerp 1920 Summer Games.

ple, so I think kind of in the middle is where we were. What's really neat about it is that virtually every person who came into that room was wearing either an Icelandic wool sweater or some form of Falcons jersey or shirt or something like that."

Palson and fellow Icelander George Sigurdson originally approached True North Sports + Entertainment, which organized the Falcons/New Iceland 150 Tribute Night.

Events included an in-arena video tribute, a pre-game gathering in the concourse, and a national anthem performance by local Icelander Sol James Heitha Forsyth, accompanied by Jets regular SoulBear.

Those attending the tribute were seated together during the game, many wearing Falcons apparel or Icelandic attire.

Palson said the evening served as an important history lesson for those unfamiliar with the Falcons' accom-



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY CORRINE EINARSSON

Icelanders Rod Palson and George Sigurdson contacted True North Sports + Entertainment, who helped arrange the special evening.

plishments and the 150th anniversary of New Iceland.

"Lots of my friends who are hockey fans and know an awful lot about hockey, they're not aware of the Falcons, and it's a very, very significant part of hockey history," said Palson. "I just feel like between what happened

last night and what took place in the days leading up, which I did probably about eight or ten media interviews, I think we significantly turned the dial up in terms of the awareness of who the Falcons were, what they did, and the significance of the Icelandic culture in Manitoba."



The 1920 Winnipeg Falcons were honoured at the Feb. 4 Winnipeg Jets vs Montreal Canadiens game deemed Falcons/New Iceland 150 Tribute Night at Canada Life Centre. Family members of three different 1920 Falcons players were in attendance for the special evening.



The 1920 Winnipeg Falcons hockey team received a video tribute during the Winnipeg Jets vs Montreal Canadiens game.

sports&recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Lightning earn first league win with 4-1 victory

By Lana Meier

The Interlake Lightning U15AAA boys picked up their first league win of the season Saturday afternoon, skating to a 4-1 victory over the Capitals at Stonewall VMSC.

Bentley McCorrister led the way for the Lightning with a hat trick, scoring twice in the third period to put the game out of reach. He finished the afternoon with three goals and an assist as Interlake controlled the scoreboard in all three periods.

Owen Webb opened the scoring late in the first period, converting a pass from McCorrister and Tripp Warburton at 8:51 to give the Lightning a 1-0 lead after 20 minutes.

The Capitals tied the game midway through the second period on a short-handed goal by Jacob Mirrlees, but the Lightning responded quickly. Just over two minutes later, McCorrister restored the Interlake lead, finishing a setup from Zachary Schram to make it 2-1.

Interlake pulled away in the third, with McCorrister scoring twice unassisted — first at 7:22 and again at 1:43 — to seal the win.

The teams were nearly even in shots, with the Lightning holding a narrow 41-40 edge, but Interlake capitalized on its chances and limited the Capitals to a single goal despite sustained pressure.

The game featured a physical edge throughout, with both teams combining for 11 minor penalties.

The victory marked a milestone moment for the Lightning, who earned their first league win of the season through a full-team effort and strong finish in the final frame.

UPCOMING GAMES:

The Lightning return to action Friday, Feb. 13, when they face the Thrashers Blue at Gateway Blue (7:15 p.m.), before hosting the North Stars on Saturday, Feb. 14 at Stonewall VMSC (5:15 p.m.).

> BUNGE CHAMPIONSHIP, FROM PG. 21

knew we weren't out and were still in a good position — we just had one more game to win."

Preparation and mindset were key heading into the semifinal, he added.

"Knowing that, we made sure we were organized and ready in the morning with a solid plan to overcome the small mistakes we made in the 1-2 game," Huminicki said. "Ending the night with some laughs and getting an early rest was also important to making sure we were sharp right out of the gate. The most important thing we do is have some fun."

Huminicki also credited the strong community support he felt throughout the week.

"It makes me feel seen in the community and has a great impact on my personal confidence in the game," he said. "I'm meeting lots of residents I've never met before who recognize me from curling, and it surprises me every time. All those people — friends and strangers — are the reason I curl as competitively as I do and dedicate so much time to the sport."

Earlier in the playoffs, Walter defeated Marnoch 8-6 in the Page 3-4 game, running the Carberry rink out of stones in the 10th end. Marnoch had advanced with his upset of Carruthers, while Walter reached the playoff round with wins over Steve Irwin of Brandon and Tanner Lott of Fort Rouge.

The championship field featured a new triple-knockout format, with Carruthers, McDonald, Calvert and Walter all advancing through the opening round unbeaten. Preliminary round wins for Calvert came over Stefan Gudmundson of Steinbach and Irwin, while McDonald defeated Derrick Anderson of Gimli and Marnoch. Walter's early victories were against Marcus Titchkosky of Morden and Lott.

With the win, Calvert will represent Manitoba at the Montana's Brier in St. John's, N.L., from Feb. 28 to March 7. Manitoba will be represented by two teams at the national championship, as Matt Dunstone's rink has pre-qualified for the event.



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY LANA MEIER

Interlake Lightning's Bentley McCorrister of Peguis recorded a hat trick in Saturday's 4-1 win over the Capitals at Stonewall VMSC.



Interlake Lightning captain Maddyn Dalgleish carries the puck up ice during league action against the Capitals at Stonewall VMSC on Saturday.

Kodiaks endure tough week in Price Division play

By Annaliese Meier

The Lundar Kodiaks remain at the bottom of the Price Division standings with a 2-18 record in Winnipeg High School Hockey League action after a challenging three-game week.

Lundar opened the stretch with a 12-2 road loss to Kildonan East on Feb. 3. The hosts scored three times in the opening period and added five more in the second to take control of the game. Conway Anderson and Kolten Bell-Sinclair scored for the Kodiaks.

The Kodiaks returned home Feb. 4 but fell 11-4 to Linden Christian. After the visitors built a five-goal lead

through two periods, Lundar showed some pushback in the third. Noah Kuzyk, Bell-Sinclair (two) and Aaden Monkman found the scoresheet in the final frame.

Lundar wrapped up the week with a 10-3 home loss to Murdoch MacKay on Feb. 6. Bell-Sinclair led the Kodiaks offensively with a hat trick, scoring once in each period, while Murdoch MacKay capitalized on special-teams opportunities and sustained pressure.

The Kodiaks return to the road next week, travelling to John Taylor for a 3:30 p.m. start on Feb. 11, before facing Warren on Feb. 12.

Manitoba's ice makers: small-town roots, world-class impact

By Annaliese Meier

While elite curlers compete under bright lights at national and international championships, the conditions they rely on are often created by ice makers with roots in small Manitoba communities.

That connection was on display at the Selkirk Curling Club, where fresh ice was being prepared ahead of men's provincial competition under the direction of Matt Rankine, a Manitoba-based ice technician whose work regularly takes him across North America.

Rankine is part of a group of Manitoba and Winnipeg ice makers widely respected within curling circles for their technical expertise and consistency at major events. Another Manitoba ice maker, Greg Ewasko of Tyndall, is currently in Italy preparing ice for the upcoming Olympic Winter Games. Ewasko would otherwise have been part of the Selkirk crew, Rankine said.

From Rankine's perspective, Manitoba's reputation for producing world-class curling ice is built on decades of mentorship and shared knowledge.

"I would say it's kind of a legacy thing," Rankine said. "We were fortunate enough to have Hans Wuthrich in our province, and Eric Montford, who — along with Shorty Jenkins out of Ontario — really developed this way of making ice. The grassroots of it started right here in Manitoba."

That knowledge, Rankine said, was passed down through generations of technicians, including Mark Shurek and Ewasko, both of whom have worked major national and international events.

"I'm two generations removed from that," he said. "I got the opportunity to learn from Greg Ewasko, Hans Wuthrich, Mark Shurek and Eric Montford, who is my uncle. To be able to learn from the best in the world is a pretty special thing."

Curling ice preparation is a highly specialized skill requiring precise control of temperature, humidity, pebble and surface texture. Even small imperfections can affect stone movement and fairness of play.

"It has to be perfectly flat and perfectly level," Rankine said. "The rocks will always find areas that are not level."

At Selkirk, Rankine worked alongside club volun-



Matt Rankine oversees ice preparation at the Selkirk Curling Club ahead of men's provincial competition. The Manitoba-based technician is part of a network of ice makers regularly selected for national, international and Olympic-level events.

teers to break in newly refreshed, or "green," ice — a stage where technicians are still fine-tuning conditions and want stones running repeatedly over every sheet.

That process included a practice game played by the provincial senior men's champions, skipped by George Hacking. The goal, Hacking said, was to help "work in" both the ice and the rocks before the provincials begin.

"We always appreciate the opportunity to practice on competition ice, so we volunteered to play against a Selkirk team to break in the rocks and the ice," Hacking said. "We had a very good turnout of volunteers and the exercise was a great success."

From a curler's perspective, Hacking said green ice can play differently than a settled surface, especially when stones have been freshly sanded.

"Green ice is very heavy and with fresh sanded stones it's very swingy and heavy," he said. "It's a good opportunity to work on positive releases to try and 'set a rock back' to delay the massive curl at the end."

Hacking said the practice game also serves a practical purpose for the ice crew: it gives technicians immediate, real-world information about how the



George Hacking, skip of the provincial senior men's champions, sweeps during a practice game at the Selkirk Curling Club. The game helped break in freshly prepared ice ahead of men's provincials.

stones are tracking — and whether anything needs to be corrected before competition begins.

"They watch and look for any feedback — hopefully the rocks track consistently and fairly evenly as to line and weight," he said. "The more consistent the rocks, the more personal skill is a factor."

As experienced competitors, Hacking said senior-level curlers can help identify issues early, including stones that aren't running true.

"The main thing is to get the rocks moving," he said. "If we saw a 'bad rock' we could notify him, but the Curl Manitoba rocks are high quality and consistent."

While curlers can offer feedback, Hacking emphasized that ice maker expertise is the foundation of fair, consistent championship conditions.

"Ice maker expertise is the most critical factor — balancing temp and humidity to keep the ice hard, without a lot of frost buildup," he said. "Curlers are at their mercy — but it's the same for both teams."

Rankine said that balance is achieved through constant monitoring and adjustment, including control over building temperatures.

"You're constantly just trying to make sure the water is the best, the scraper blade is the best, the temperatures are set proper — everything," he said. "Because without that, they'll notice."

Volunteers remain essential to delivering that standard, Rankine added.

"It's huge," he said. "Without volunteers, we couldn't do this."

Although Selkirk's senior men's team is not competing this week due to scheduling conflicts between Manitoba qualifying and the Canadian championships, Hacking said the club's involvement remains significant.

"Selkirk hosts quite often in the rotation and other than Steinbach's new facility, Selkirk's one of the best places to watch," he said. "It takes hundreds of volunteers, and Selkirk and area curling clubs step up to volunteer and provide the best ice, sight lines and entertainment value whenever we host."

Hacking also pointed to Selkirk's ability to deliver under pressure, including hosting a provincial event in a modified bubble in 2022.

"The committee works countless hours and should be commended for bringing Selkirk to the forefront of the curling world whenever we host," he said.



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY BRETT MITCHELL

Volunteers and ice technicians work together at the Selkirk Curling Club as freshly prepared ice is broken in ahead of men's provincial competition. A practice game involving the provincial senior men's champions helps break in the ice and stones while providing early feedback on consistency.

Rather than being measured solely by teams on the ice, Manitoba's influence on curling continues to be felt behind the scenes — through the ice makers, volunteers and veteran curlers who help shape championship play long before the first draw begins.

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Lightning split U18 AAA weekend with win over Kenora, loss to Southwest

By Lana Meier

The Interlake Lightning U18 AAA squad picked up an emphatic home-ice win before running into a strong Southwest Cougars team as the club wrapped up a busy stretch of league play last week.

Interlake opened the two-game set with a 10-6 victory over the Kenora Thistles on Tuesday, Feb. 3 at Teulon-Rockwood Arena, producing one of its highest-scoring performances of the season.

The Lightning scored twice in the opening period and added three more in the second to build momentum before erupting for five goals in the third. Damon Marquart led the offensive charge with a hat trick and an assist, while Ryder Kirk chipped in with a goal and four helpers. Thoren Corbett had a goal and three assists, and Carson Kirk added two late goals, including an empty-net marker.

Also finding the scoresheet for Interlake were Elijah Rempel, Jacob Keck and Reid Toporoski. Grayson McDon-

ald earned the win in goal, stopping 32 of 38 shots as the Lightning weathered Kenora power-play pressure.

Interlake followed that effort with a 5-2 loss to the Southwest Cougars on Saturday, Feb. 7 at VMSC Arena in Stonewall. The Cougars carried the play early, outshooting the Lightning 46-24 and scoring three times in the first period.

Corwyn Bear provided the offence for Interlake, scoring both Lightning goals — one late in the first period and another midway through the second — but Southwest sealed the outcome with a third-period empty-net goal. McDonald made 41 saves in a busy night between the pipes.

Interlake now turns its attention to a demanding stretch of games, beginning Tuesday, Feb. 10, when the Lightning host the Central Plains Capitals at Teulon-Rockwood Arena. The schedule continues Wednesday, Feb. 11 in Winnipeg against the league-leading Winnipeg Bruins, followed by road games in Morden



EXPRESS PHOTO BY LANA MEIER

Interlake Lightning forward Corwyn Bear celebrates after scoring one of his two goals during U18 AAA action against the Southwest Cougars on Saturday, Feb. 7 at VMSC Arena in Stonewall.

against Pembina Valley on Feb. 14 and Wheat Kings on Sunday, Feb. 15. and a home matchup with the Bran-

Falcons a hair short in loss to second-place Warriors

By Lana Meier

The Lundar Falcons came close to making it two straight wins Saturday night.

In their lone game of the week, Lundar headed south to St. Jean Arena to face the second-place St. Malo Warriors.

Entering the game fifth in the Capital Region Junior Hockey League, Lundar showed its ability to compete with the league's best in a narrow 2-1

loss.

The Falcons trailed 1-0 through two periods, setting the stage for a tense third. After St. Malo extended its lead to 2-0 midway through the final frame, Lundar's Liam Russell scored a timely goal with 1:35 remaining to pull the Falcons within one.

Lundar pressed for the equalizer in the final minute but was unable to beat St. Malo goaltender Logan Mazinke, who finished with 16 saves.

At the other end, Lundar's Dylan Leclair stopped 25 shots as the Falcons fell to 5-16-0-3-2 on the season, good for 23 points.

The Falcons remain two points ahead of the sixth-place Arborg Ice Dawgs entering the league's penultimate week, with playoff matchups still to be determined.

Lundar will play three of its four remaining regular-season games this week before returning to St. Jean on

Feb. 17 to close out the schedule.

UPCOMING GAMES:

Wednesday, Feb. 11 — at St. Malo Warriors, 8:15 p.m., St. Jean Arena

Friday, Feb. 13 — at Arborg Ice Dawgs, 8 p.m., Arborg & District Arena

Saturday, Feb. 14 — at La Broquerie Habs, 7:30 p.m., HyLife Centre

Tuesday, Feb. 17 — at St. Malo Warriors, 8 p.m., St. Jean Arena

Ice Dawgs looking to shuffle the deck in final weeks of regular season

By Kieran Reimer

Last week brought some unexpected time off for the Arborg Ice Dawgs.

Due to ice issues at Arborg & District Arena, the Ice Dawgs' Friday night game against the Selkirk Fishermen was postponed.

With no other games on the schedule, Arborg had time to rest up ahead of the busy end to the regular season and the upcoming playoffs.

The Ice Dawgs returned to action Monday against the Fishermen for

an 8:30 p.m. start at Arborg & District Arena. Due to press deadlines, scores and statistics from the game were unavailable at press time.

The contest marked Game 27 of 30 in the regular season for the Ice Dawgs, who entered the matchup with a 5-17-0-2-2 record.

At the time, Arborg sat sixth in the seven-team Capital Region Junior Hockey League, with fifth place still within reach.

The Ice Dawgs now look ahead to

the final three games of the regular season, with two more contests this week against the last-place North Winnipeg Satellites and the fifth-ranked Lundar Falcons. Their playoff opponent could be determined by the end of the week.

Friday's matchup against Lundar will close out the Ice Dawgs' regular-season home schedule.

Arborg will then wrap up the 30-game campaign on the road against the Selkirk Fishermen on Friday, Feb.

20.

REMAINING REGULAR-SEASON GAMES:

Tuesday, Feb. 10 — at North Winnipeg Satellites, 8 p.m., Billy Mosienko Arena

Friday, Feb. 13 — vs. Lundar Falcons, 8 p.m., Arborg & District Arena

Friday, Feb. 20 — at Selkirk Fishermen, 7:30 p.m., Selkirk Recreation Complex

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Carman family watches Olympic history unfold

By Jessica Eblie

When the women's doubles luge competition launches at the 2026 Olympic Winter Games in Italy, former long-time Carman residents Wayne and Carol Allan will be watching with pride. Their granddaughter, 22-year-old Kailey Allan, will be representing Team Canada in the inaugural women's doubles luge event.

Kailey will compete on Feb. 11 in Cortina d'Ampezzo as part of Canada's women's doubles luge team, with her partner Beattie Podulsky. While doubles luge has been an Olympic event for decades, Milano Cortina 2026 will mark the sport's debut for women. The discipline features two athletes racing together on a single sled, requiring precise timing, communication and trust while reaching speeds of more than 130 kilometres per hour.

For Wayne and Carol, who lived in Carman for nearly 40 years before moving to rural British Columbia in 2015, the moment is historic, celebratory and deeply personal.

"We were in Carman for about 40 years," Carol said.

Carol added that she still hears from friends in Carman who are following Kailey's Olympic run via Facebook.

According to Kailey's parents, Stacey and Don, she has always been a superb athlete.

"She did every sport she could growing up," Carol said. "She did ski racing, competitive softball and track, (but) as you go along and get older,

you have to start weeding out some of these sports."

Kailey first stepped onto a luge sled at age 10, after spotting a sign in Calgary inviting youngsters to try the sport. What began as a summer camp soon became a high-performance pursuit, carrying her from training sessions to international competition venues around the world.

For the first 11 years of her luge career, Kailey competed as a singles slider. She represented Canada at the Youth Olympic Games in 2020 in St. Moritz, Switzerland, gaining experience on the international stage and earning a seventh-place finish overall.

Kailey came up short in qualifying for the women's singles luge event at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, but nevertheless persisted in her efforts to qualify for the 2026 Games. That determination ultimately led to a new goal — women's doubles luge.

About 18 months ago, Kailey and fellow Calgary-based athlete Beattie Podulsky decided to partner up, forming one of Canada's most competitive women's doubles luge teams. "They were both single sliders previously and thought, well, Canada needed a doubles women's team," Stacey said.

Despite their recent partnership, the duo has already found success. Last season, they earned a bronze medal at the Under-23 World Championships and another bronze as part of Canada's mixed team relay at the International Luge Federation (FIL) World



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Kailey Allan (right) and her partner Beattie Podulsky at the 2025 International Luge Federation (FIL) World Championships in Whistler, B.C., where they captured the bronze.

Championships in Whistler, BC. In the lead-up to the Olympics, the duo ranks just outside the top 10 internationally in women's doubles and has placed well in qualifying competitions leading up to Milano Cortina.

"Their goal is to do well (at the Olympics), probably place in the top eight, maybe top six," stated Stacey.

According to the Allan family, luge is "the fastest sport on ice." Singles sliders can reach speeds exceeding 143 kilometres per hour, while doubles athletes face added challenges of weight, balance, unison and trust.

For the duo of Kailey Allan and Podulsky, Kailey rides on the bottom of the sled, with her partner lying on top of her. The athletes are secured together, navigating narrow ice corridors at extreme speeds, all while trying to be the fastest team in order to win the event.

"It's kind of like driving a double-decker bus down an F-1 track," Stacey said.

Despite the intensity, Kailey's family describes her as someone who balances competitiveness with joy.

"She's determined and driven, but she's having fun," Stacey added. "There's always a smile on her face."

As the Allan family prepares to travel to Italy to support Kailey in person,

they say the experience has already been incredible. Beyond medals and rankings, they hope Kailey's journey sends a message to young athletes.

"Anything's possible," Carol said. "The places she's been, the people she's met. Sport builds character and life experience."

In a text communication, Kailey stated that she is looking forward to competing and has done everything possible to prepare for these Games.

"I'm super excited to compete in my first Olympic Games and represent Canada in the first ever women's doubles event," she added.

Although Carman was never Allan's hometown, her family's decades-long presence in the community means her Olympic debut is being followed with interest by residents who knew her grandparents and have watched her career unfold from afar.

As the Olympics approach, Allan's participation offers local readers a chance to witness both an Olympic first and the success of an athlete connected to the community through family roots rather than residence. Kailey's Olympic moment is a reminder that no matter where you grew up in Canada or who you are, Olympic dreams can take shape and slide all the way to the global stage.



Kailey Allan (back) and Beattie Podulsky (front) preparing for a luge run in competition.

get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



Recipe courtesy of The Adventure Bite

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 10 hours

Servings: 9-10

4 1/2 pounds pork shoulder or Boston butt

26 ounces sweet and spicy barbecue sauce

1/2 tablespoon garlic

1/2 tablespoon fresh cracked black pepper

fresh sandwich buns

Dandy Celery, cut and pickled

Pulled Pork Sandwiches with Pickled Celery and Jalapenos

jalapenos

coleslaw (optional)

potato salad (optional)

baked beans (optional)

Place pork in slow cooker.

Mix barbecue sauce, garlic and pepper. Pour over pork shoulder.

Cook on low 8 1/2-10 hours or high 6-7 hours.

Shred meat and serve on buns with pickled celery and jalapenos. Top with coleslaw, if desired. Serve with potato salad or baked beans, if desired.



Recipe adapted from Mel's Kitchen Cafe

Total time: 30 minutes

Servings: 6

3 1/2 cups water, plus extra if needed

1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk, divided

12 ounces pasta shells

salt, to taste

1 teaspoon cornstarch

1/2 teaspoon dry mustard

Simple Skillet Mac and Cheese

1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
1 1/2 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese

2 tablespoons butter, cut into small chunks

ground black pepper, to taste

In nonstick skillet over high heat, bring water, 1 cup evaporated milk and shells to simmer. Season with salt, to taste. Cook, stirring, until pasta is tender and liquid thickens, 9-12 minutes.

In small bowl, whisk remaining evaporated milk, cornstarch and dry mustard. Stir into skillet. Continue simmering until slightly thickened, about 1 minute.

Remove skillet from heat. Stir in cheddar and Monterey Jack cheeses in batches, adding water to adjust consistency. Stir in butter then season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Photo courtesy of Unsplash

Ask the Money Lady

Dear Money Lady Readers – Why not adopt the new “Soft-Life” culture in 2026?

The hustle culture is something my demographic, (ages 50 to 65) and our parents have been used to all our lives. Living by the motto that you can’t be successful unless you “work really hard, show up every day ready to overcome any obstacle, with a no-limit attitude, and of course, programmed for greatness.” We quickly passed judgment on anyone who didn’t seem to be working hard, and everything in our lives had to become second to our all-encompassing career. Sound familiar? There are tonnes of books out there printed in the 80’s, 90’s and early 2000’s pushing the hustle culture. Suggesting you should create your own “vision board;” telling you to not limit yourself, and this one I love: “never settle for less than what you truly deserve.” My generation was always told to: “suck it up buttercup – stop complaining and get out there, get over it, work harder, and do more.” Well, that’s not the way life is now.

Today young Millennials and the vast majority of Canadian and American Gen’Zs are adopting the new “Soft Life” culture, the complete opposite of their parent’s belief system. They don’t want to live to work, like mom and dad did. No, they want to enjoy their life, focusing on balance, ease, self-care and personal fulfillment through intentionally enjoying the small wins. Have your Gen’Zs hit you with these statements yet: “we need you to respect our boundaries” or how about this one, “it’s not about the money” (regardless of you paying, you still have to go along with their choices not yours). Parents and older generations are having a tough time making this mental shift and many have written me about their troubles. They believe their kids are unmotivated or ungrateful for the monetary assistance from their parents.

While I definitely can relate, I’m thinking the hustle culture generation should also adopt the “Soft-Life” mantra too. Now before you throw down the paper in disgust – keep reading please. When we were young, it was all about proving “you could do it!” But to what end? I’ve seen co-workers, family and personal friends hit their late 40’s and 50’s still pushing, only to be silenced by a single tragedy. Was it worth it – maybe, only you will know? I



never thought I would ever say this, but I’m glad this next generation is pushing back on the hustle mentality. Good for them to want more out of life than just their career. It’s been tough for all of us oldies to deal with the micromanaging bosses, back-stabbing coworkers and peers that have accomplished more in less time.

The Soft-Life is really not about having a lot of money, but rather the evolution of an occasional “treat yourself” lifestyle to be happier. This could mean buying a name-brand grocery product instead of a generic one. Burning a scented candle on your desk while you work from home. Treating yourself to a special coffee drink, spending the afternoon curled up on the sofa with a good book and a plate of homemade cookies, or working on a quite task like a puzzle. The trend is to slow down, enjoy the little things and stop the “pushing for more” attitude. This movement rejects the idea that a difficult life is the only path toward an enjoyable one. It’s all about a life designed for calm, less complexity, sincerity with people, and finding time to unwind, pursue hobbies or spend time with the ones we love. Could we be entering an age of more traditional values? Maybe. Choosing to reject the old narrative can’t be that bad. We all would be better off if we could stop and put our mental and physical health first for once, not just for a day or a weekend, but for our whole life.

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).

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Riverton Bifrost Holdings Inc.

NOTICE OF TENDER

April 1, 2026 - March 31, 2027

Riverton Bifrost Holdings Inc. invites tenders for
SNOW REMOVAL

at the Icelandic River Lodge in Riverton.

For information or to schedule a visit to the site,
please call 204-378-2937.

- Contract will be awarded with option for a one year extension
- Tender will not necessarily be awarded to lowest bidder
- Submission Deadline:
Friday, March 6, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.
- Submit tender by mail or email to:
Riverton Bifrost Holdings Inc.
Icelandic River Lodge
Box 448, Riverton, MB R0C 2R0,
rbh.inc@outlook.com



NOTICE OF VOTERS LIST / VOTING AS A NON-RESIDENT / PERSONAL SECURITY PROTECTION

MUNICIPALITY OF BIFROST-RIVERTON

Notice is hereby given that a copy of the VOTERS LIST may be revised at 329 River Road, Arborg, MB between the hours of 8:30am-12:00pm and 1:00pm-4:30pm. At this time staff will be available to update the voters list by:

- (a) adding the names of voters who are entitled to have their names on the list;
- (b) deleting the names of persons who are not entitled to have their names on the list; and
- (c) making such other correction of errors to the list as required.

VOTER ELIGIBILITY:

A person is eligible to have their name added to the Voters List if they are:

- 1) a Canadian citizen and at least 18 years of age on election day; and
- 2) a resident of the local authority for at least six months prior to election day, or a registered owner of land in the municipality for at least six months prior to election day.

VOTING AS A NON-RESIDENT VOTER

A maximum of two non-resident property owners, per property, are permitted to vote in a municipal election. In order to vote, each of these voters must obtain written consent from a majority of the registered landowners, and file this with the S.E.O. prior to September 20, 2026. When voting, you may also be required to provide proof of ownership and/or proof of identity to the voting official.

NON-RESIDENT VOTER QUALIFIED IN MULTIPLE WARDS:

In accordance with Section 25(2) of The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act, any non-resident voter who owns property in more than one ward is responsible to notify the S.E.O. in writing, not later than September 20, 2026 of the ward in which they desire to vote. Failing the foregoing, the voter's name will be placed on the list as the S.E.O. may select.

APPLICATION FOR PERSONAL SECURITY PROTECTION:

A voter may apply in writing to the S.E.O. no later than September 20, 2026 to have their name and other personal information omitted or obscured from the voters list in order to protect the voter's personal security. The application may be submitted in person, by mail or fax and must include your name, address and include proof of identity.

All changes to the voters list must be completed by September 20, 2026 in preparation for the municipal election to be held on Wednesday, October 26, 2026.

Municipality of Bifrost Riverton
Box 70, Arborg, MB R0C 0A0
Phone: 204-376-2391 Fax: 204-376-2742

PETS

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WEEKLY NEWS
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Buyer for all farm-yard scrap, machinery and autos. No item too large! Best prices paid. Phone Alf at 204-461-1649.

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Large round hard core bales of 2nd cut alfalfa brome grass. Call 204-461-0722.

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Tollak 2 is a 55 plus bldg. with river view 2 bedroom apts. available. Central air, F/S, DW & microwave; large storage area off the kitchen and a balcony; utilities and parking extra. Call the onsite office 204-482-2751 for AVAILABILITY.

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Call now for your cash! Your Interlake coin collector - buying old coins & paper money. Phone David 204-798-3045.

WANTED

Kerosene or Heating oil gravity feed cottage heater, must be in good condition if it meets my heating needs. Call Jim at 204 224-3515. Cash at pickup.

WANTED

Firearms wanted. Looking for all unwanted firearms. Fully licensed for both non-restricted and restricted. Anywhere from individual items to estates. Cash buyer, paying top dollar. Please call or text Adam at 204-795-2850.

WANTED/BUYING 1950's-80's Scandinavian, Danish, Canadian Mid-Century Modern Furniture (Teak, Walnut, Rosewood), lighting, ceramics, textiles, stereo or design. Contact Daniel at TEXT/PHONE: 204-918-1607.

NOTICES

URGENT PRESS RELEASES - Have a newsworthy item to announce? An exciting change in operations? Though we cannot guarantee publication, MCNA will get the information into the right hands for ONLY \$35 + GST/HST. Call MCNA 204-947-1691 for more information. See www.mcna.com under the "Types of Advertising" tab for more details.

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TDM Sports sells clothing, sporting goods and trophies, provides custom embroidery services, and operates as the local **MTS dealer**. This role is well suited to someone interested in retail sales, working with mobile devices and services, and learning embroidery operations. There is strong potential for increased responsibility and rewards for the right candidate.

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Send resume to:

Box 38, Arborg, MB R0C 0A0

Fax to: 204-376-5836 or

Email to: tdmsports@hotmail.com or Apply in person at 279 Main St., Arborg



Senior Election Official

Applications are being accepted for the position of Senior Election Official (SEO) for the Municipality of Bifrost Riverton.

The SEO is responsible for the overall municipal election process and must be able to interpret and understand all aspects of legislation pertaining to the municipal election process and provide consistent advice to other election officials and to the public.

This position starts once appointed by council resolution with varied hours of work in the year of a regular election, falling in the months of September and October.

Duties will include:

- appointing other election officials as required;
- establishing and maintaining the voter's list;
- giving public notice of nominations;
- receiving and verifying the nominations;
- establishing and equipping the voting places;
- giving public notice of elections;
- printing the ballots;
- overseeing all aspects of the election on election day and all other duties as established in the Municipal Councils Election Regulation and The Northern Affairs Act.

In the years when a regular election is not required, the SEO will be responsible to update and maintain the voter's list and to conduct by-elections, if required.

The successful applicant must have some election experience, strong management, communication and interpersonal skills. Computer experience would be a definite asset.

For more information about this position please email: info@bifriv.ca

The Letter of Interest from applicants should include education and experience and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Letters can be delivered, mailed or faxed to:

Municipality of Bifrost Riverton
Box 70 329 River Road
Arborg, MB R0C 0A0
Phone: 204-376-2391
Fax: 204-376-2742
Email: info@bifriv.ca

We thank all applicants for their interest, however, only those being considered for an interview will be contacted.

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Closing date: April 30, 2026

Please forward resume to:

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Diageo Canada Inc, P.O. Box 2000, Gimli, Manitoba, ROC 1B0

ATTENTION: Part-time Security Officer position

*We thank all applicants in advance for their interest in the position.
Only those candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.*



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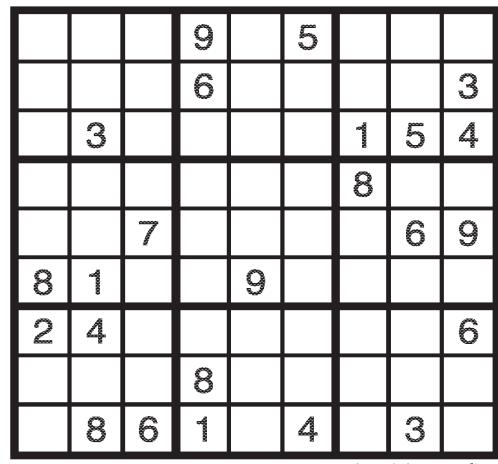
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take a break > GAMES

SUDOKU

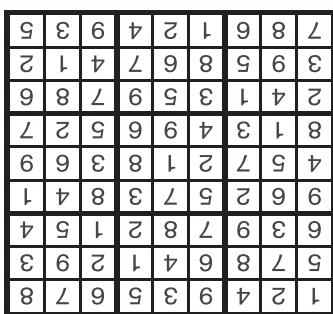


Fun By The Numbers

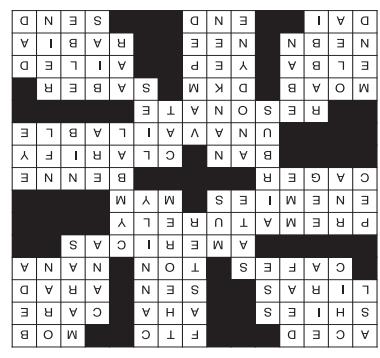
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Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



Sudoku Answer



Crossword Answer

Senior Election
Official
(Contract)



Lead the Administration of Gimli's Municipal Election

The Rural Municipality of Gimli is seeking a highly organized and impartial professional to serve as Senior Election Official for upcoming municipal elections.

This contract role oversees election planning, staffing, public communication, and ballot integrity to ensure a fair, transparent, and legally compliant election process.

Flexible hours, competitive remuneration, and mileage provided. Applications are reviewed starting February 12, 2026.

Scan the QR code or visit <https://www.gimli.ca/p/employment-opportunities> to view full details.

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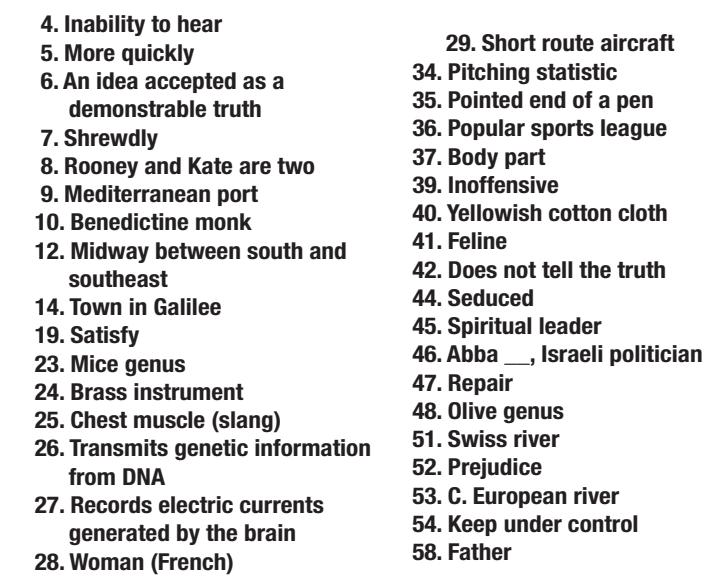
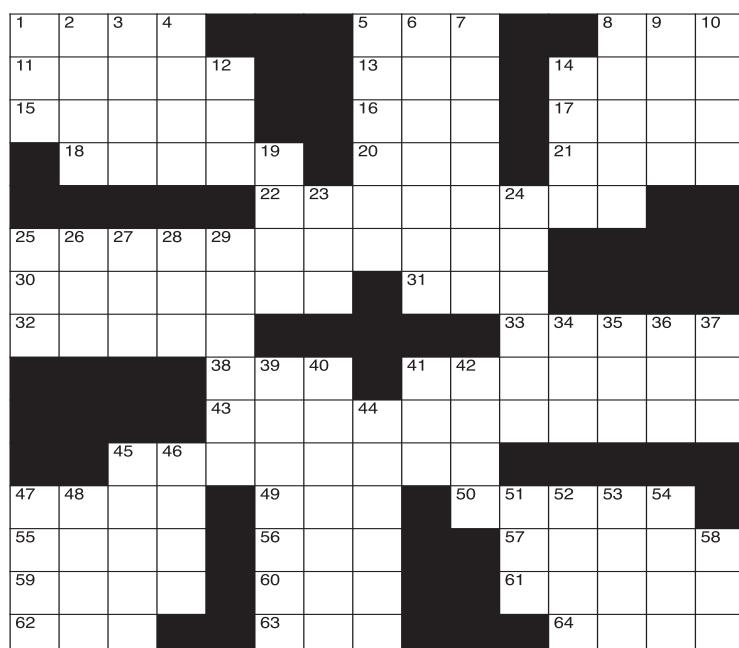
CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

- Breezed through
- Consumer protection agency
- Criminal syndicate
- Moves back from
- Satisfaction
- Feel concern or interest
- Monetary units
- Congressman (abbr.)
- Israeli city
- Restaurants
- 2,000 lbs.
- Grandmother
- North, South and Central
- In an early way
- Foes
- Social networking platform
- Early term for basketball player
- Another name for sesame plant
- Disallow
- Provide greater detail
- Inaccessible
- Evoke emotions
- Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- Celtic punk rockers
- A fencing sword
- Actor Idris
- Affirmative (slang)
- Afflicted in mind or body
- One point north of northeast
- Born of
- Social media hand gesture
- Hong Kong food stall pa dong
- Opposite of beginning
- Email function

CLUES DOWN

- Sign language
- Fashionable
- Borough in Helsinki
- Inability to hear
- More quickly
- Idea accepted as a demonstrable truth
- Shrewdly
- Rooney and Kate are two
- Mediterranean port
- Benedictine monk
- Midway between south and southeast
- Town in Galilee
- Satisfy
- Mice genus
- Brass instrument
- Chest muscle (slang)
- Transmits genetic information from DNA
- Records electric currents generated by the brain
- Woman (French)
- Short route aircraft
- Pitching statistic
- Pointed end of a pen
- Popular sports league
- Body part
- Inoffensive
- Yellowish cotton cloth
- Feline
- Does not tell the truth
- Seduced
- Spiritual leader
- Abba , Israeli politician
- Repair
- Olive genus
- Swiss river
- Prejudice
- C. European river
- Keep under control
- Father



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BIRTHDAY



Happy 65th Lorna
-Love from your family



Lea who was always there to lend a helping hand.

Leslie was predeceased by his son Leslie- John (Dub), his father Harvey, sister Marilyn McDonald, grandmother Nancy Anderson, his father-in-law Edward and sister-in-law Debbie.

Commercial fishing was not just Leslie's livelihood- it was his passion and his way of life. He began fishing alongside his father at a young age and carried that love with him throughout his life. When his sons were old enough, he proudly brought them onto the lake, passing his knowledge, work ethics, and deep respect for the water.

Leslie and Donna spent many fishing seasons together, living on their gas boat while fishing at Catfish Creek, McBeth Point, Egg Islands, and along the shores of Lake Winnipeg. Leslie fished right up until the very end - only days before entering the hospital. Even as ill as he was, his heart remained on the lake, wishing he could be there helping Jamie and Meagan lift nets.

Leslie was truly an earth angel, known for his courage and selflessness. At just 15 years old, he saved three young boys from drowning in the river in Selkirk, Manitoba. Over the years he went on to save the crew of the fish freighter *HaleyLynn* as it sank in the dead of night, rescued two of his nieces from drowning in Pine Dock, and saved the lone occupant of an overturned vehicle submerged in a water-filled ditch. For his extraordinary bravery, Leslie was honored at the Manitoba Legislative Building with a Life Saving Award from the Life Saving Society of Manitoba.

Leslie proudly served as the team leader of the Auxiliary Coast Guard out of Pine Dock for many years, rescuing countless boaters in distress on Lake Winnipeg. He also dedicated many years as a councilor on the Pine Dock Community Council, where he worked to support and strengthen his community.

An avid sports fan, he never missed a Winnipeg Jets game. If he was too tired to watch, he would go to bed and listen to the game on his radio, which went 24/7 on CJOB! He also followed the Blue Bombers and enjoyed watching curling. But nothing compared to watching his sons, and later his grandchildren, playing hockey. He made every effort to attend their games, cheering proudly from the stands.

Leslie's grandchildren were his pride and joy. He loved spending time with them, taking them on side by side rides, boat rides, chicken hunting, to the beach and on countless adventures. His special place to take them was to "Gilligan's Island" for a wiener roast/picnic and a day of swimming.

Leslie also had a deep love for snowmobiling. He loved to spend long days cruising with his buddies, often Dave and Willy McIvor and others. Most recently he would go cruising with his grandchildren.

Leslie, Dad, Grampa - Your work on earth is done, now you can rest. While our hearts ache with your loss, we take comfort knowing you are no longer suffering and are free from pain and sorrow. Give Dub our love and a big hug.

You will be loved forever, missed every day, and never forgotten until we meet again.

"Your heart of gold stopped beating, hardworking hands at rest, God broke our hearts to prove to us, he only takes the best."

Tributes: www.gilbartfuneralhome.com

Gilbart Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.



Would you like to join our team?

Evergreen School Division is looking for bus drivers!

We require caring, safe drivers to be bus drivers for our students.



Pre-Register by Wednesday, February 25, 2026
Location: 234 Tudor Lane in the Gimli Industrial Park.

Contact the Transportation Office
at 204-642-6263 to register.

Course Dates: February 28 & March 1

Times: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

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Classifieds Announcements



OBITUARY



Nicole Lee Grushka

Nicole Grushka was just 20 years old when she left us on January 27, 2026. In that short time, she brought joy, laughter, and love to everyone around her. Her kindness and fun-loving spirit made every moment brighter.

She is deeply missed by her parents, Fred and Pam Grushka; her brother, Coleman; and her sister-to-be, Sinead Gibbs. She will also be lovingly remembered by her grandparents, Richard and Cecilia (Tootsie) Rogoski and Marge Grushka; her uncle Michael and aunty Jodi; and her cousins Jade (Brodie and Grayson), Lane (Richelle), and Jake Rogoski. Extended family and the many friends who were like family also hold a special place in her heart.

Nicole will be remembered for her love of family time and her selflessness, always thinking of others. Her smile, her jokes, her hugs, and her love of life will never be forgotten. She touched the lives of everyone she encountered—friends, family, co-workers, teachers, and the children she cared for—leaving behind countless memories that will be cherished forever.

Though her time with us was far too short, the impact she made will last a lifetime in the hearts and memories of so many. In her 20 years, she filled our lives with laughter, music, dance and love. Children were drawn to her, friends felt like family, and every room was brighter when she entered. Twenty years was not enough, but her spirit will live on forever in our hearts.

A celebration of Nicole's life will be held on Saturday, February 21, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. at the Winnipeg Beach Legion. The family invites anyone who has memories or stories of Nicole to write them down and place them in a memory box to be treasured.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made toward an annual scholarship in Nicole's honour via the following link <https://gofund.me/71f785a7b> As she was pursuing a career in teaching, this scholarship will support a Winnipeg Beach student graduating from GHS into the childcare or teaching field—helping another young person follow their dreams, just as Nicole was following hers.

We are truly thankful to the doctors, nurses, and staff at the Gimli Community Health Center for their care.

Rest in peace, our baby girl. We love you and always will.

Tributes: www.gilbartfuneralhome.com

Gilbart Funeral Home, in care of arrangements.



OBITUARY

Kay Ellen Sigridur Byron (nee Eirickson)

October 4, 1932 – January 31, 2026

With heavy hearts we announce the passing of Kay Byron, aged 93 years of Lundar, MB who passed away at the Eriksdale Personal Care Home with her loving family at her side.

In keeping with her wishes, cremation has taken place and a memorial service will be held later in the Spring. An announcement of time and date will be shared at that time.

Arrangements by:

ARNASON FUNERAL HOME

Ashern – Lundar

1-204-768-2072

1-866-323-3593



Daniel Vincent Robak

June 23, 1972 – January 28, 2026

With heavy hearts, the family announces the passing of Danny, who passed away suddenly due to complications from an infection related to the flu.

Funeral service will be held at the Selkirk United Church, 202 McLean Avenue, Selkirk, MB., on Friday, February 13, 2026. Viewing at 1 p.m., service at 2 p.m., and a lunch to follow.

Friends and family are invited to visit Danny's memorial page at www.interlakecremation.ca, where memories and condolences may be shared.

Arrangements entrusted to: **Interlake Cremation & Memorial Services**
204.482.1040

OBITUARY



Patricia May McKinley (née Wheeler)

September 19, 1946 - February 2, 2026

Our beloved Pat, Mom, travelled a long, resilient transition to rest in the early hours of February 2nd, 2026, at age 79 years.

Born in Pickering, Ontario, Pat is survived by her devoted husband of 31 years, Jim McKinley, her children with Stephen Haight (1st husband) Jason (Allison), and Kristin Haight (Werner), her sister Elizabeth (Jim) Erickson, granddaughter Evelyn, niece Janet (Syd) Smith, as well as extended family and friends.

She is predeceased by sister Marjorie (Don) McManus, mother Alma (nee Skoglund), and father C.N. (Bert) Wheeler.

A graduate of The Greater Niagara General Hospital School of Nursing in 1968, Pat dedicated over 44 years to the care of others as an Emergency Department Registered Nurse. During her tenure, she managed the Emergency and Operating Departments, and was also a PICC nurse specialist. Her exceptional skills and empathetic, no-nonsense work ethic assisted countless patients at St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston NY and Victoria General Hospital in Winnipeg.

With fortitude, tenacity and grit, Pat raised her daughter Kristin as a single mother, instilling her industriousness, discipline and integrity along the way with unwavering support.

Pat's retirement was spent lovingly with Jim at their home in Ponemah, MB, where her green thumb thrived in her floral gardens. She enjoyed researching her own, as well as her children and husbands' genealogical roots, and was able to travel to connect with extended cousins in the UK and Ireland. Pat loved to collect items of beauty and curiosity such as antiques, jewellery and ceramics with a particular love of the art nouveau era.

Cremation has taken place and a private gathering will be held at a later date.

Pat's immediate family would like to thank the exceptional staff at Betel Home Foundations in Gimli, MB for their care and compassion for these last years of her life journey.

Memorial donations in Pat's memory can be made to <https://www.betelhomefoundation.ca/> donations

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