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Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton discuss options for new soccer and baseball fields, funding commitment

By Patricia Barrett

The Arborg-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission advisory committee hosted an open house last week to gather public feedback on a proposal to build new soccer and baseball grounds.

The Town of Arborg and the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton will now continue discussions about funding.

The current sports fields behind the Arborg arena, pool and curling club have been earmarked for the construction of a new personal care home the province has committed to build.

The Feb. 9 meeting at the Arborg hall outlined plans for new fields at a location yet to be determined.

The meeting drew residents from both Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton, which share recreation costs in Arborg on a 50-50 basis. Because Bifrost-Riverton surrounds the town, its residents regularly use Arborg facilities.

The meeting included background on the proposed sports grounds, information from earlier planning sessions and a public survey, and potential funding sources.

Town of Arborg chief administrative officer Cindy Stansell said about 83 members of the public attended — 47 from Bifrost-Riverton, 31 from Arborg



The proposed sports fields will include a new building. Land has not yet been designated for the new facilities.

and five from the Rural Municipality of Armstrong, whose residents also use the facilities.

"There was a lot of great input provided at the open house that the committee will bring back to review and discuss," said Stansell.

Attendees viewed a mock-up of what the proposed soccer and baseball fields could look like, along with a building to house sports equipment.

Land for the new fields has not yet been designated, and the town is waiting for a funding commitment from Bifrost-Riverton.

"A location has not been selected as of yet," said Stansell. "The Town of Arborg and Municipality of Bifrost-



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY RON JOHNSTON

Arborg-Bifrost Parks & Recreation Commission's advisory committee held an open house Feb. 9 at 7 p.m. at the Arborg-Bifrost Community Hall to discuss options for new soccer and baseball fields, plus a new building, to replace the current fields behind the arena that are slated for the development of a new personal care home. Members of the public provided feedback.

Riverton have long been partners on recreation and we currently have a commitment from the Town of Arborg towards 50 per cent of the land purchase, and we are just awaiting a decision from the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton for their portion of the property. Once we have a commitment secured, the committee will begin looking for the appropriate land to fit the vision of the community."

Stansell said that although the town

and Bifrost-Riverton "would need to share in the purchase of the land" and cover future maintenance costs, the actual construction of the facility [i.e., grounds and building] will be financially shouldered for the most part by the provincial government, which awarded Arborg a \$1.2-million matching grant under the GRO program (Manitoba Growth, Renewal and Opportunities for Municipalities).

Continued on page 5



Evergreen Staff Spotlight

Celebrating the People Who Make Our Schools Work

Meet Carla Gonzalez – Payroll Clerk, Evergreen School Division

For a little over a year, Carla Gonzalez has been an essential part of Evergreen's operations team. She first joined the division as the Teacher Substitute Booking and Administrative Assistant at the Board Office before moving into her current role as Payroll Clerk. Today, Carla manages payroll for the division's 10-month and casual staff, as well as bus drivers — a role that requires precision, care, and a deep commitment to supporting the people who make Evergreen thrive.

Originally from outside Canada, Carla and her family moved here three years ago. "Becoming part of Evergreen has been a meaningful step for me," she shares. "I'm happy that my kids get to learn here, and that I get to contribute to creating a positive environment for the people who work in the division."

Though her work happens behind the scenes, its impact is far-reaching. "In payroll, the biggest responsibility is making sure every employee is paid correctly and on time," Carla explains. "There's a lot of careful checking and attention to detail. People may not realize how much work goes into each pay, but it's something we take very seriously."

As both an employee and a parent of children at Gimli High School, Carla sees Evergreen from two perspectives — and that connection fuels her pride in the division's mission. "Knowing that my children are receiving a quality education from people who show up every day and give their best reminds me why this work matters," she says.

What Carla loves most about working in Evergreen is the people. "The human side of things really matters here; people care about each other's well-being," she explains. "I've also been given opportunities to grow professionally, and that has meant a lot to me. It feels good to work in a place where you're encouraged, supported, and seen."

Carla also wants the community to recognize the value of public education. "Sometimes people take it for granted," she reflects. "But it's not only free — it's high quality. Public education works because so many people care and put in the effort, from teachers and support staff to those of us working behind the scenes."

Thank you, Carla, for your dedication, professionalism, and the care you bring to keeping Evergreen's people supported and our schools running smoothly.



Interviewed by and pictured with trustee Dianna Auer



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Manitoba Liberal leader Willard Reaves says ESD's remedial reading program second to none

Liberal bill will make literacy assessment mandatory across province this fall

By Patricia Barrett

The Evergreen School Division has gone the extra mile to provide support to students who are struggling with reading, says the leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party.

And its literacy intervention program could be used as a model for other school divisions across the province.

Willard Reaves, a retired Winnipeg Blue Bombers football player who became leader of the Liberal party in 2025, paid a visit to Gimli's three schools last week to get a first-hand look at the division's literacy program.

Reaves visited Sigurbjorg Stefansson Early School, Dr. George Johnson Middle School and Gimli High School where he observed the intervention program and spoke with students, then met with Supt. Scott Hill.

"The Evergreen School Division's program gives students an opportunity to learn when they're behind a



Willard Reaves spoke with students about his own experience with reading challenges when he was a child and the invaluable help he received from his Grade 3 teacher.

little bit on their reading. The division goes the extra mile to make sure they're included. The schools work with the students," said Reaves last Wednesday. "I'm blown away by how this school division is really taking care of our future generations."

Mandatory literacy testing will be implemented this fall in every division across the province, but ESD is already ahead of the pack, having



EXPRESS PHOTOS COURTESY OF WILLARD REAVES

Former Manitoba Liberal Party leader Dr. Jon Gerrard (left) and former Winnipeg Blue Bombers football star and current Manitoba Liberal Party leader Willard Reaves (third from right) met with Evergreen School Division students and staff in Gimli to learn about the division's reading intervention program that could serve as a model for other school divisions.

identified a few years ago a need for assessing students who are struggling to read and providing them with extra reading support. And Reaves said that proactive approach in which no student is left behind is truly admirable.

"Right now, schools around Manitoba are doing pretty much their own

thing, and the Evergreen School Division decided to do something hands-on that's working. They see the science and they know what they have to do," said Reaves. "The one thing that was so impressive to me was looking at the children with the smiles

Continued on page 8

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Funding for this project [in part] has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Agricultural Climate Solutions – On-Farm Climate Action Fund

Young curler shines at Hit, Draw, Tap Provincial Championships

By E. Antonio

Gimli curler Maddox Boaz is quickly making a name for himself after earning second place in his age category at the Hit, Draw, Tap (HDT) provincial championships held in Selkirk on Feb. 8.

The nine-year-old, who has curled for five years with the Gimli Curling Club, said he was "happy, happy, happy" to finish among Manitoba's top young curlers.

HDT is a skills-based competition for athletes aged six to 12 in which participants demonstrate ability in three fundamental shots — the hit, draw and tap.

Maddox competed against seven other curlers. Fellow Gimli Curling Club athlete Adley Gibson also competed in the 10-12 age category.

Maddox scored three points on his hit, two on his draw and one on his tap after taking a tumble. His total resulted in a three-way tie for second, forcing a sudden-death draw-to-the-button tiebreaker, which he won to secure second place.

Of the three shots, Maddox said the hit is his favourite because it feels the easiest. His favourite part of the championship was winning a trophy.

"I was very proud to make it to pro-



Maddox and 2014 Olympic champion Jill Officer.

vincials," he said.

He qualified after finishing in the top three at a local competition in Gimli and later won the regional event at the Springfield Curling Club to advance.

In preparation, he spent extra time practising in addition to his regular



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Gimli curler Maddox Boaz delivers a stone during the Hit, Draw, Tap provincial championships in Selkirk on Feb. 8, where he finished second in his age category.

junior program.

"He refrained from throwing rocks full sheet for a large amount of the season as he wanted to keep his weight consistent on his shots," his father Jay Boaz said.

Following the competition, Maddox met Olympic champion Jill Officer and posed for a photo with her 2014 Sochi Olympic gold medal.

CurlManitoba event and development manager Elaine Owen said she was pleased with the response to this year's championship and emphasized the importance of positive early competition experiences.

"It is a great starting point for athletes to be able to experience a competition," she said. "CurlManitoba has seen many athletes from HDT play-

ing in our provincial competitions and some have gone on to compete in nationals."

This was Maddox's first provincial appearance after previously competing only in local funspiels. His family remains his biggest support system.

"My dad is my coach and my mom is my biggest fan," he said. "I was very happy my Grams and Grums came to watch me and to show my grandma and grandpa my trophy when I got home."

He now hopes to continue improving and compete in bonspiels — and offers simple advice to other young curlers:

"Wear warm socks," he said. "It's cold out there."

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Maddox Boaz, 9, with his second-place trophy he earned at the Hit, Draw, Tap Provincial Championships in Selkirk on Feb. 8. Pictured with Viterra representative Ray Baloun.

> RECREATION, FROM PG. 2

	Arborg-Bifrost 2021 \$398,125.71	Bifrost- Riverton 2021 \$155,358.14
2021 Total		
Total	2022 \$251,217.14	2022 \$167,952.15
Total	2023 \$216,268.57	2023 \$171,298.04
Total	2024 \$268,667.06	2024 \$321,316.92
Total	2025 \$237,695.14	2025 \$257,795.56
2021-2025 Totals	\$1,371,973.62	\$1,073,720.81

MUNICIPALITY OF BIFROST-RIVERTON.

A breakdown of Bifrost-Riverton's spending on recreation in Riverton from 2021 to 2025, as well as in Arborg, where Bifrost-Riverton provides 50 per cent of the funding for recreation.

Committed to getting the new sports fields built, the town will be embarking on fundraising initiatives and applying for more grants.

"The construction of the actual facility will be made possible thanks in large part to a grant from the Manitoba provincial government. The Town of Arborg applied for and received a grant of \$1.2 million through the Manitoba GRO Program," said Stansell. "This is a matching grant so we're now looking for ways to raise enough funds for the remainder. We're looking at fundraising ideas, local donations and applying for additional grants to help make this project happen. At the end of the day, we will only build whatever we are able to raise funds for."

The Town of Arborg operates as a political entity separate from the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton. But the two local governments share the cost of recreation in Arborg. Bifrost-Riverton also provides separate funding for recreation in Riverton, which is not cost-shared with Arborg.

A few years ago, the provincial department of municipal relations conducted an evaluation under its municipal service delivery improvement program after Arborg requested a review of its fiscal and shared services with the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton.

Released in 2023, the document titled *Arborg: Municipal Service Delivery Improvement Program* states that Bifrost-Riverton underwent the same evaluation in 2022 and that it

funds," she said.

When asked about other soccer/baseball grounds in Arborg, Love said she doesn't know what's available, but Riverton has a number of facility options for the two sports.

"In Riverton, we currently use the baseball diamonds on Park Avenue at the skate park for our youth baseball program, and we set up two U7-U9 soccer fields on the green space behind the baseball diamond," she

said. "There are also three baseball diamonds at Riverton Collegiate. We also use the soccer field at the Riverton Early Middle School for U11-U13. The soccer field at the Riverton Collegiate is available for U15-U18."

The Express asked Love how much Arborg-Bifrost (i.e. shared costs between the two local governments) spends on recreation and how much Bifrost-Riverton spends on recreation in its municipality.

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Manitoba Hydro Integrated Resource Plan & Major New Facility Public Review

On February 2, 2026, the Manitoba Government referred Manitoba Hydro's 2025 Integrated Resource Plan ("IRP") to the Public Utilities Board ("PUB") for its review and recommendations.

The IRP examines how best to meet Manitoba Hydro's expected short-term (2030) and long-term (2035) growth in electricity consumption with different options to increase electricity supply. The primary objective of the IRP is to plan for safe and reliable energy that meets the evolving needs of Manitobans. The IRP includes both Manitoba Hydro's electrical system and the natural gas system operated by Manitoba Hydro's subsidiary Centra Gas Manitoba Inc.

Manitoba Hydro's IRP includes its recommended future development plan, which incorporates a major new generating facility consisting of three new simple cycle combustion turbines at the Brandon Generating Station that will provide approximately 750 MW of capacity. In addition to the IRP, the needs for and alternatives to Manitoba Hydro's proposed new natural gas generating facility will be referred to the PUB for its review and recommendations.

The PUB will be conducting a public regulatory review over the coming months into both the IRP and the proposed major new natural gas generating facility. While these reviews by the PUB will not immediately result in a change to the rates charged by Manitoba Hydro, the costs of the new generating facility and other aspects of the development plan are expected to have an impact on future electricity rates.

Further details related to the upcoming review are available at: www.pubmanitoba.ca.

You can share your views on the filing with the Public Utilities Board in three ways:

- **As a Presenter** – If you want to make a virtual or in-person formal presentation to the Public Utilities Board on this matter and are willing to respond to questions about your presentation, please submit an application to become an approved Presenter using the application form linked on the PUB website (www.pubmanitoba.ca) by June 18, 2026. Presentations are limited to a maximum of 10 minutes and presenters will be scheduled to appear during the hearing in August.
- **Written comment** – If you would like to comment in writing on this review, please go to www.pubmanitoba.ca and provide your written comment.
- **As an approved intervener** – If you want to actively participate in the public hearing as an Intervener, please go to www.pubmanitoba.ca and apply for Intervener status on or before February 24, 2026. Intervenors are required to represent the interests of a significant group of customers and may be required to combine their intervention with others representing similar interests.

A Pre-Hearing Conference with prospective Intervenors will be held in the Board's hearing room, at the address below, commencing at 9:00 a.m. on Monday March 2, 2026.

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Local communities grieve alongside Tumbler Ridge

By Jennifer McFee

While a small B.C. town grapples with the aftermath of a mass shooting, local Interlake communities express empathy from half a country away.

On Tuesday, Feb. 10, six children and two adults were killed in a mass shooting in a high school and a home in Tumbler Ridge, B.C. The 2,400-person community is grieving for students, a teacher and family members of the shooter, who also died of a self-inflicted shot. Many others were injured in the incident.

Communities across Manitoba have lowered their flags to half-mast, including the Town of Stonewall, which kept its flags lowered until Feb. 17 as a symbol of respect, reflection and solidarity with the sorrow-stricken B.C. town.

"In moments like this, distance does not divide us. Communities may be miles apart, but sorrow travels swiftly and compassion even faster. We pause together to honour lives impacted and to hold space for healing," states a social media post by the Town of Stonewall.

"Our thoughts are with the families, friends, first responders and the entire Tumbler Ridge community during this incredibly difficult time."

Stonewall council shared condolences with the District of Tumbler Ridge after the tragic mass shooting shook the B.C. community.

"We are profoundly saddened by the tragic loss and the many lives impacted. Our thoughts are with the families who are grieving, the friends and classmates facing unimaginable sorrow and the entire community working to support one another in the days ahead," states a post on the Town of Stonewall Facebook page.

"We also want to recognize and thank the first responders, emergency personnel and all those providing care



EXPRESS PHOTO BY RAYME THOMSON

Flags fly at half-mast across Interlake communities — including Gimli — in solidarity with the residents of Tumbler Ridge, B.C., following the Feb. 10 mass shooting that claimed the lives of six children and two adults.

and support in the midst of this tragedy. Your courage, compassion and dedication do not go unnoticed. From Stonewall to the District of Tumbler Ridge, please know we stand with you. Sending strength, comfort and unwavering support."

Similarly, Rockwood council acknowledged the tragic event and expressed condolences to the Tumbler Ridge community.

"Council members feel a strong connection to the values of community support, resilience and the creation of compassionate, connected communities nationwide," states a social media post by the RM of Rockwood. "We see you, Tumbler Ridge."

In a letter to Tumbler Ridge Mayor Darryl Krakowka, Rockwood council extended their deepest condolences to the community in the wake of the tragedy.

"Though we are far away, our thoughts are with students, staff, families and all members of your community during this profoundly difficult time. We recognize the challenges your council and community face in supporting those affected, and we hope that knowing people beyond your province are thinking of you brings some measure of comfort," states the letter.

"Please accept this letter as a gesture of our solidarity, sympathy and respect. Our thoughts are with your community, and we send our heartfelt support and best wishes for healing and peace."

Across the Interlake School Division, flags are also flying at half-mast.

"I know I speak for our board of trustees and the entire ISD community when I extend my condolences to

Continued on page 7

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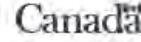
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RM of Gimli settles lawsuit with Kingdom Construction, pays \$2.1 million

By Patricia Barrett

The RM of Gimli will pay \$2.1 million after it settled a lawsuit brought against it by Kingdom Construction Ltd. with regard to its termination from work on the Gimli wastewater treatment plant.

Kingdom filed a statement of claim in 2020 against the municipality, its consultant Birchtree Consulting Ltd. and Birchtree owner Bonnie Macintosh for damages after Kingdom started working on an expansion to the Gimli wastewater treatment plant and had its contract terminated in 2020.

The RM issued a "message from council" that it posted under its special meeting agenda of Jan. 30, saying the RM and the other defendants "resolved the litigation" for a total of \$4.1 million.

The RM of Gimli's contribution to the settlement is \$2.1 million, and the balance will be paid to Kingdom by the other defendants.

"This settlement resolves all outstanding claims for amounts alleged to be owing to Kingdom Construction Limited and avoids the cost and uncertainty of a lengthy trial," states council's message.

Companies were invited to bid on the wastewater treatment plant expansion, which entailed the construction of a sequencing batch reactor, digester, effluent equalization basin, piping gallery extension, screening, ultraviolet disinfection and odour control system, according to a request for bids posted on Merx in October 2017.

According to the RM's timeline, the upgrade project was awarded in November 2017, and the contract "terminated" in October 2020. The settlement with Kingdom was reached on Dec. 17, 2025.

The RM will be paying its portion of the settlement from the municipality's "accumulated surplus."

"This approach ensures no tax in-

crease for residents, no impact on municipal services and continued financial stability for the RM," states the message from council. "Settlements of this nature are commonplace in complex litigation and are a routine part of municipal operations across Canada, especially for large and complex infrastructure projects."

The *Express* reached out to Ontario-based Kingdom Construction for comment.

OTHER COUNCIL NEWS:

The RM will be reviewing and reducing the number of committees it has as part of its commitment to modernize the municipality.

Council placed committee reductions on its Feb. 4 committee of the whole meeting agenda.

Chief administrative officer D.J. Sigmundson said councillors sit on "more than 40 committees" and that this structure had developed over many years without a full review.

"As the RM modernizes, the system must reflect current roles, resources and responsibilities," said Sigmundson.

Council has already determined that some committees are inactive, some external committees are fully self-sufficient and no longer need council representation, and several committees have operational mandates "better suited to administration, not elected officials."

Decisions on the downsizing initiative have not been finalized.

"Council is exploring reducing the total number of committees by about half. The goal is to ensure efforts are focused, effective and aligned with staff capacity," said Sigmundson. "Some groups may continue their work independently, without council appointment or formal committee status."

Sigmundson went on to say that

council thanks every committee member and volunteers for their contributions.

"Their work has had a significant, positive impact on the RM of Gimli," he said. "Once decisions are finalized, council will meet with each committee to explain the changes and outline any transition plans."

- The RM posted a report from Cheryl Buhler who is the operations manager for the RM's Gimli newcomer program.

Buhler provided a 2025 overview of newcomers staying at the RM-owned "dormitory" or "training centre" located in the industrial park. The dormitory has 112 rooms consisting of 29 singles, 83 doubles and washrooms, laundry facilities, kitchen and a gym.

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, some Ukrainians choose to settle in Gimli. The dormitory, which also houses cadets for their Gimli-based flying program, was used to house the newcomers until they could find jobs and transition to housing in the community. The RM also welcomes newcomers from other countries.

Buhler wrote that there were a total of 77 newcomers staying in the dormitory in 2025, with 25 new arrivals that year.

The RM upgraded the facility in 2025.

"Major upgrades in 2025 include new security cameras, improved fire protection, repaired hot water systems, upgraded air-conditioning and heaters, and ongoing maintenance to ensure a safe, comfortable and energy-efficient dormitory," wrote Buhler. "We reached out to Efficiency Manitoba for an assessment in January."

A provincial grant is being applied for through the Community Renewal Initiatives Stream, she wrote.

Sigmundson said the RM charges rent at the dormitory.

"Revenue was \$247,000 in 2025," he said. "The grant application would fund a community project to assess our capacity to develop a program that attracts and retains newcomers."

Manitoba Harvest food bank featured the Gimli newcomer program

Continued on page 9

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> SHOOTING, FROM PG. 6

everyone who has been impacted by this terrible event," said school board chair Alan Campbell.

"We know the vital role that public schools play in communities, especially small rural communities, as sources of safety and inclusion for all students, and we're mindful of the extremely difficult path ahead for families in Tumbler Ridge."

The safety of Interlake School Division students and staff are the first priority for the board of trustees and senior admin team, he added.

"This is reflected in current divi-

sional and provincial regulations, policies and procedures currently in place and kept up to date. Families are encouraged to engage with their school or divisional leadership teams with any concerns or questions they may have," said Campbell, who also serves as the president of the Manitoba School Boards Association and the Canadian School Boards Association.

"Supports remain in place in all schools to support students and staff who may require support in the aftermath of this terrible event."

> REAVES, FROM PG. 3

on their faces. The kids who need that extracurricular intervention to help them catch up are getting that help."

Reaves said his interest in seeing all students in the province have access to equitable education has nothing to do with politics but with his own personal experience as a child growing up in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s.

That was a low period in American educational history in which there was great disparity between the educational resources provided to black schools and those provided to white schools. And there was resistance to attempts to integrate schools. Lack of equitable educational resources affected students' school performance, and that helped fuel misleading tropes about racial intelligence and justify continuing segregation.

But Reaves had a teacher who was dedicated to advancing literacy.

"I went to Kinsey Elementary School in Flagstaff, Arizona ... and I had a teacher named Mrs. Harris. She was my third grade teacher. She discovered that I was having issues with reading when I was in kindergarten and first grade, and she stuck with me even though I wasn't in her class for grades 4, 5, 6 and 7. I went to summer school. I had to stay inside sometimes during recess to do extra reading and phonics. Had it not been for Mrs. Harris, I don't know where I would have been at that particular time," said Reaves.

"As a black child growing up in the '60s, there was a lot of disparity in education. Mrs. Harris was a white teacher, and the principal, Eric Curtis, was white, but they didn't stop helping; they continued to help. They made a difference in my life. That's why I'm out here to see ESD's remedial program for myself. And I can tell you I am in awe."

Students' literacy performance across Canada has been on a downward trajectory for some time.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) administers a testing program called PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), which measures 15-year-old's ability in reading, math and science. The results are used to inform educational policies and practices among the 90 or so countries participating in the assessment.

The currently available PISA results for Canada (2022) showed the average performance of 15-year-old students in reading was trending downwards compared to 2018. That was in line with an "unprecedented drop" in the performance of students across participating countries.

Evergreen School Division posts on its website a "Continuous Improvement Report" that notes educational progress and challenges. Its 2025 report shows 77.68 per cent of Grade 3 students are reading at grade level, but in their provincial reading assessment, only 60.2 per cent of Grade 3 students were "meeting expectations" in that assessment's sub-competencies. And only 53.2 per cent of Grade 8 students were meeting expectations under the provincial reading assessment.

Given a decline in literacy performance across Manitoba, MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Liberal, Tyndall Park) introduced a private member's bill, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Universal Screening for Learning Disabilities) in the previous legislative session that will make testing mandatory, twice a year, for children in kindergarten to Grade 4, and ensure resources are allocated to students who need extra help. The bill was ultimately supported by the NDP government and the PC party and is scheduled to take effect later this year.

ESD Supt. Scott Hill said the division has already embarked on an intervention program and has been hosting

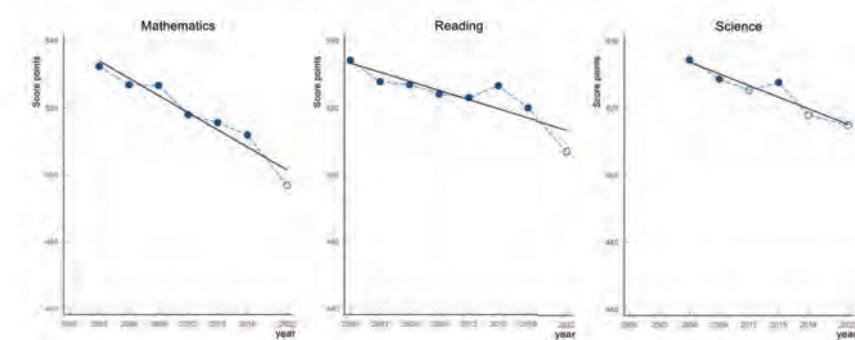
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How well did 15-year-old students in Canada do on the test?

Trends in mathematics, reading and science performance

Figure 1. Trends in performance in mathematics, reading and science



Note: White dots indicate mean-performance estimates that are not statistically significantly above/below PISA 2022 estimates. Black lines indicate the best-fitting trend. An interactive version of this figure is available at <https://oecdch.art/a40de1dbaf/C903>.

Source: OECD, PISA 2022 Database, Tables I.B1.5.4, I.B1.5.5 and I.B1.5.6.

Average 2022 results were down compared to 2018 in mathematics and reading, and about the same as in 2018 in science.

PISA data from 2022 showed the average reading performance of 15-year-old Canadian students declined since they were last tested in 2018. PISA compares data from OECD countries.

visits from a number of other provincial school divisions that want to see ESD's approach to "structured literacy" and its use of universal screening assessments for the purpose of offering early reading interventions.

"We adopted many of these practices a few years ago, and many other divisions are just at the beginning of implementing these approaches in keeping with recent legislation regarding universal screeners, as well as the Manitoba Human Rights Commission's report [titled] *Supporting the Right to Read in Manitoba*," said Hill.

The report acknowledges that ESD is ahead of the curve.

"In 2022/23, Evergreen School Division implemented a comprehensive approach to literacy instruction, premised on the principles of direct and explicit evidence-based instruction in the skills that will lead to effective word recognition and language comprehension. In 2024, Evergreen School Division was honoured with a Dyslexia Canada award for their comprehensive approach to literacy instruction," states the report (p. 67).

Hill said the division was happy to have a visit from Willard Reaves and Dr. Jon Gerrard (former MP, MLA and leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party)

and show them ESD's reading intervention program.

"They expressed interest in learning more about our approach to literacy instruction and intervention and, more broadly, our teaching approaches that aim to include and engage all students," said Hill. "Mr. Reaves shared his experience as a child. He struggled to learn to read until a teacher in Grade 3 finally provided the additional support, including systematic phonics instruction, that he needed to get on track."

Hill said the ESD board of trustees is committed to evidence-based approaches to literacy instruction and intervention, and in keeping with the Human Rights Commission's direction.

"This has meant providing support in the form of dedicated teacher time in each school to implement interventions, investing in teacher professional learning and intensive training for new teachers, as well as up-to-date evidence-based materials, curricular resources and books that are the right 'fit' for our approach to reading instruction," he said.

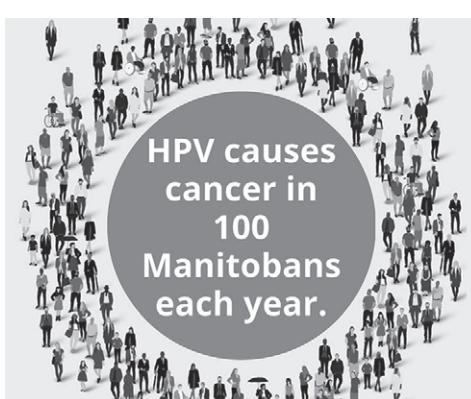
"Lower class sizes and single-grade classrooms are additional investments in early learning that contribute to our efforts to secure the best conditions for teaching and learning, especially for literacy instruction. Teaching students how to read is the most important thing we do — it's foundational to all other scholastic learning, but more importantly, it's a critical factor in making sure that students are put in good stead to becoming healthy, successful contributing citizens."



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Fisher Branch to host CFRY Radio Amateur Talent Night Feb. 21

By E. Antonio

Get ready to see the best of the best perform at Fisher Branch's CFRY Radio Amateur Talent Night on Feb. 21.

From 7 to 10 p.m. at the Fisher Branch Community Centre, 25 acts will take the stage as they compete for the title of CFRY Radio Amateur Talent Night champion.

The evening will serve as a fundraiser for the Fisher Branch Recreation Centre, with proceeds supporting ceiling renovations and upgrades to the change-room showers.

Rec Centre president Danya Ferris said the event will offer entertainment for people of all ages.

"We want to try and bring our community together and have an evening of fellowship," she said. "We know Fisher Branch has a lot of talent to be shown."

Fisher Branch has hosted talent nights in the past, the last held before the COVID-19 pandemic. CFRY talent nights, meanwhile, have taken place in rural Manitoba communities since the 1970s to showcase performers while fundraising for local projects.

Those in attendance can expect an evening of entertainment and food

featuring performers from Fisher Branch and surrounding communities.

Ferris said the 25 registered acts will be judged by community members experienced in the performance styles presented. The top three performers will receive cash prizes of \$100, \$200 and \$300, and CFRY will present a plaque for "Most Promising Talent."

Audience members are welcome and encouraged to attend. For a \$5 admission fee, guests can experience the evening firsthand.

Those unable to attend in person can tune in to CFRY 920 AM to listen to the performances.

Listeners will be able to call in to pledge toward their favourite performer. A number will be shared prior to the talent night. Pledge payments can be made by bringing cash or cheque to Access Credit Union or by e-transfer to fbreccenter@outlook.com.

"This event is important to Fisher Branch because it brings the community together, showcases talent of all ages and raises money for the rec centre," Ferris added. "Without the community, these events cannot be



EXPRESS PHOTO BY PROTAGONLINE

CFRY Amateur Talent Night returns to the Fisher Branch Community Centre on Feb. 21. Up to 25 local performers will take the stage as the community fundraises for recreation centre renovations. Pictured are 2018 winners Burnell Stevenson, Dusty Cochrane, Corrina Sinclair and Jasmine Henry.

successful. It highlights the talent we have and gives us a chance to come together for a night of fun."

To Ferris, a successful talent night means contestants and audience members having fun and wanting to

return. She said she is excited to see the community come alive in support of the Fisher Branch Rec Centre.

"It takes a community to keep these buildings running and functional," she added.

> GIMLI, FROM PG. 7

in a spotlight story.

Harvest's Amanda McVorran wrote that Gimli's newcomer program proved to be a success and the program would no longer require food distribution services offered by Harvest Manitoba.

"The Gimli Chamber of Commerce applied to Harvest Manitoba for additional nutritional support in August 2022. As the program grew, securing additional support was vital to the longevity and success of the initiative, then called the Ukrainian Refugee Program," wrote McVorran. "At that point 35 refugees were being housed and it was anticipated that more would soon take advantage of the opportunity to build a new life in Gimli."

The newcomer program is the re-

sponsibility of the RM of Gimli, with Melanie Specula as its coordinator.

"Melanie shared that the program was always meant to be transitional. Since its inception, approximately 380 persons have decided to make Gimli their new home," McVorran wrote. "Thanks to the generosity of the Gimli community, and the many volunteers who welcomed the newcomers and pledged their support to the program

through employment offers, transportation and settlement assistance, persons were able to gradually move out of the temporary housing and integrate into the community. Melanie emphasized that this initial support was instrumental to the success of the program."

- At its Feb. 4 committee of the whole meeting,

council reviewed meeting protocols that are provided under the procedures bylaw in a schedule titled "Standard Order of Business & Debate."

The schedule contains rules around administrative presentation, ques-

Continued on page 13

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Gimli band hosting final fundraiser before nationals

By E. Antonio

The Gimli High School Concert Band and Jazz Orchestra are preparing to take their music to a national stage — and the community is invited to help send them there.

On Friday, Feb. 20 from 6 to 10 p.m., the Lakeview Hotel banquet hall will host the final fundraiser supporting the school's trip to Niagara Falls. A total of 49 students in grades 10 to 12 earned an invitation to perform at the 54th MusicFest Canada: The Nationals, an invitation-only event reserved for ensembles that achieved four stars or higher at last year's provincial festival in Winnipeg.

Organizers say the evening is meant both to celebrate the students' achievement and raise funds toward the approximately \$2,300 cost per student. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., with live performances by the students, prize draws, silent and live auctions, and activities suitable for all ages, including children.

Students have spent months preparing through rehearsals and peer evaluations, refining their performances

ahead of the May 12-16 festival. Organizers described the trip as a rare opportunity for a small-town group to represent Gimli nationally, perform for leading Canadian music educators, and attend workshops and concerts featuring elite bands and choirs from across the country.

They added the invitation reflects the strength of Gimli's band program and the continued support of the community that has helped build it.

Admission to the fundraiser is free, but attendees can contribute through auctions, prize draws and donations, with organizers promising "a few surprises" throughout the night. Community members can also help through prize donations and sponsorships.

Organizers thanked band director Stephanie Marks along with local and provincial businesses and individual supporters for helping make the trip possible. Donations will continue to be accepted after the event.

For more information or to donate, contact Christina at 204-599-6662 or Jenn at 204-651-1345.



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Visit the Gimli Lakeview Hotel banquet hall Friday, Feb. 20 from 6 to 10 p.m. to support Gimli High School's band trip fundraiser. Concert band and jazz ensemble students qualified to perform at MusicFest Canada: The Nationals this May.



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Horsepower meets snow power at Fisherton Horse Club skijoring event March 14

By E. Antonio

A thrilling skijoring event is set for the Fisherton Horse Club starting at 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 14.

The free-for-all races will see teams of two compete on the horse club property, with one member riding a horse while the other is pulled behind on skis or a snowboard.

Fisherton Horse Club member Scott McKay is organizing the afternoon after first learning about the sport four years ago in Cold Lake, Alta.

"It's where the horse and ski world combine," McKay said.

His friend hosted the event as a fundraiser for multiple sclerosis, and McKay became instantly hooked after witnessing the thrill firsthand.

"It was really cool watching everyone — adults and kids included — have fun while going through the course," he said. "The next year I joined the race and I confirmed it is lots of fun going as fast as you can and watching your teammate glide through the course."

McKay typically rides his horse while his brother is pulled behind. He said competitors in Alberta reached speeds of up to 40 kilometres per hour, with skiers and snowboarders jumping and flipping up to 10 feet in

the air over jumps.

While the Fisherton Horse Club races will be less intense than those McKay first experienced, participants can still expect to be pulled across 300-metre stretches, with the option of four-foot jumps. The course is designed to be friendly for both beginners and experienced racers.

Since this is the club's first official year hosting the event, McKay expects it to be a casual gathering.

"We just want people to show up and have a good time without the added stress of competing against each other," he said. "We are just looking to build up interest and experience for the sport."

Depending on how the event goes, McKay added next year's race may be formally timed and judged, but for now the focus is on fun for all.

Participation is free and competitors of all ages are welcome. Athletes must bring a helmet, rope saddle, rope, horse, and skis or snowboard. Individual racers are encouraged to attend whether they wish to ride or be pulled, and those without a teammate will be paired with others on the day of the event. If time permits, children can also bring calf sleds or GT Snow Racers for a ride.

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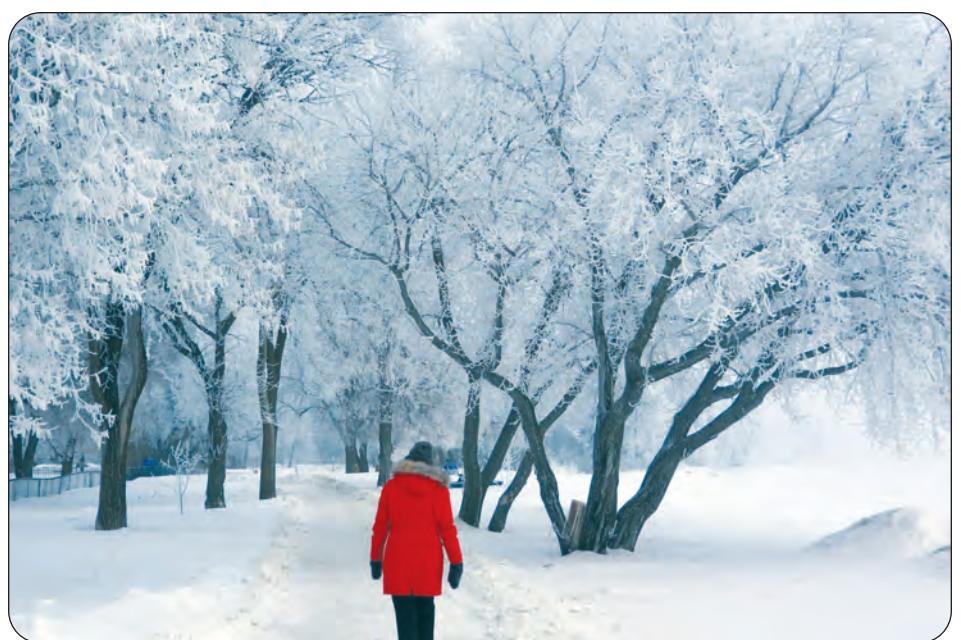
Fisherton Horse Club will host free skijoring races March 14. Club member Scott McKay rides a sorrel while pulling his brother Clint McKay on skis during a demonstration event last year.

Spectators are welcome, with hot-dogs and warm beverages available by donation, with proceeds supporting future Fisherton Horse Club

events and maintenance. Fire pits will also be lit to help keep fans and racers warm throughout the afternoon.

To register, call or text Scott McKay at 587-280-0612.

Frost-kissed trees



EXPRESS PHOTO BY BEN HEWSON

A mild winter day greeted Gimli on Friday, with sunshine and a slight south-southeast breeze as temperatures reached -2 C and dipped to -10 overnight. After fog rolled through the night before, trees across the community were left coated in delicate hoar frost, sparkling in the morning light. Help record the temperature of the day and email us your photos of friends and family enjoyed the outdoors: news@expressweeklynews.ca

15th annual Gimli Ice Festival bringing winter to heel with ice-packed weekend of fun

By Patricia Barrett

The Gimli Ice Festival will be unleashing the hounds and the horses, the flying fish and the frozen T-shirts, and the cars and the ATVs for its upcoming winter festival that's geared towards getting people outdoors and bringing winter to heel.

The festival's co-chairs, Susan and Peter Holfeuer, and their volunteer committee always bring something new to the event each year. The popular festival brings people from across the Interlake and beyond to Gimli for a non-stop weekend of events in early March.

"This year the festival is proud to be collaborating with 19 different organizations, many of them facilitating an event with the support of their incredible volunteer team. Several of these organizations have been involved with the festival since its inaugural year in 2012," said Peter Holfeuer. "Attendees to this year's festival can continue to enjoy many of the traditional events, plus some exciting new additions like the Jus Chillin ATV & UTV Show 'N Shine and Demo, the Brave the Journey to Arendelle event, the Polar Games Team Competition, and the Hailey's Way Ice Fishing Derby."

Some of the favourites from past festivals include horse-drawn wagon rides and harness dog winter sport demonstrations. The Gimli Red River Métis local organization will be holding a vendor market and showcasing traditional Métis cultural performances.

"The incredible team from the Riverton & District Friendship Centre will be providing festival attendees with bannock cooked over an open fire, along with hot tea and taffy on a stick. A local area band, Leddwyn,

will be performing live following the fireworks that take place at 7 p.m. on March 7 at the Gimli harbour," said Holfeuer. "The festival will also be presenting a 20-minute video that will contain many of the memories and highlights of the festival over the last 14 years. This video, along with another short film being presented by the Gimli International Film Festival, will be screening at the Lady of the Lake Theatre throughout the festival weekend."

Some of the festival's beloved events include the frozen fish toss, the frozen T-shirt competition, the Hands of Lugh's Viking age re-enactments, festival mascot Cooley's outdoor games, and the Winnipeg Sports Car Club's Fire on Ice racing on Lake Winnipeg.

For those who prefer to race using their own two feet, Chris Isfeld's Viking's Challenge run across Lake Winnipeg is scheduled for Saturday morning of the festival, with proceeds going to skin cancer patients across Canada.

Local businesses are getting into festival mode by participating in a storefront decoration competition that's starting in late February in the lead-up to festival weekend.

The festival attracts a plethora of sponsors each year. Holfeuer said Chudds car dealership and power sports dealer had offered in early January to become a major sponsor of the festival to help sustain and support its growth.

"Besides the addition of the Chudds group of businesses and most recently Gimli Ford, the festival is very thankful to all the local area businesses that provide their support, many for the last 10-plus years," said Holfeuer.

The Gimli Ice Festival is scheduled for the weekend of March 7 and 8.

> GIMLI, FROM PG. 9

tions of clarification — including the stipulation that "questions must be factual in nature (clarifying the report/presentation) and not extend into debate or opinion" — council motions, first round of debate, administrative input, second round of debate, voting and motions to refer the matter to administration.

It contains a section on abstaining from voting if a councillor or their dependents has a "direct or indirect pecuniary interest or a pecuniary liability." In that

case the councillor must disclose the direct or indirect pecuniary interest or liability, withdraw from the meeting without voting or participating in discussion, and refrain "at all time from attempting to influence the matter."

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EXPRESS FILE PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

The Vikings never fail to show up during the Gimli Ice Festival weekend and do battle at the harbour despite the presence of hundreds of children.

One thing the festival won't be offering is inflation; the price remains budget-friendly with a pass costing only \$5.

For a full list of festival events and times, visit the festival's website at gimliicefestival.com or its Facebook and Instagram sites.

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Local agronomist blends research, farming and family to support Manitoba growers

By E. Antonio

Kristen MacMillan wears many hats — researcher, farmer, teacher and mother — and brings all of them together in her work to help Manitoba farmers grow healthier, more productive crops.

She is a research agronomist with the University of Manitoba, studying best management practices and cropping systems for soybeans, dry beans and peas to help farmers improve profitability and sustainability.

She also applies her research at home on her family's crop and livestock farm near Marquette, where she enjoys crop scouting and caring for cattle with her husband Bryce MacMillan, while watching their young children grow into — and develop a love for — the agriculture industry, just as she and her husband did.

"In my research, I develop and extend knowledge to farmers and agronomists for crop management," MacMillan said. "I want them to continuously improve their practices — that is my goal."

MacMillan recently presented her research findings at Ag Days in Brandon from Jan. 19 to 21, where she spoke about improving agronomic decision-making and building resilient cropping systems.

She began her research career in 2013 after completing undergraduate

and graduate degrees in agriculture and cropping systems. Raised on a farm, she developed a strong interest in crop management, particularly the science behind soil properties and plant yields. Today, her focus is on developing region-specific soybean research to support farmers in the Interlake and beyond. In fact, she began working in soybeans at the same time they started growing them on her family's farm.

"We were asking production questions on the farm, which shaped my research mission to help answer those questions for soybean farmers in Manitoba and western Canada," she added.

"I'm in a unique position where I can take practical knowledge from the farm and expand it through research, developing knowledge specific to Manitoba's growing conditions."

Researchers know there is a strong interaction between the environment and how crops grow, and that interaction drives MacMillan's agronomy research.

"Research sometimes finds its way to the farm too," she said. "This past year, a research team installed flux towers on our fields to monitor carbon and water exchange. Many students are collecting data on how cropping practices interact with our ecosystem."

MacMillan said her work examines the many decisions farmers must make when growing soybeans and pulse crops, including when and how deep to seed, what rate and which varieties to plant, how to manage pests, and strategies to diversify crop management and rotations.

"All of these management decisions influence the yield potential of the crop, and that's what I study and develop," she said. "We are looking for the best practices and highest yield potential of each factor. Being aware of ongoing research — and even being part of it through on-farm research — is something I encourage all farms to apply."

Through her research, MacMillan has learned that soybean yields in Manitoba are highly dependent on seasonal moisture.

"Generally, the more rainfall, the higher the crop yield," she said, noting farmers must manage many risks, from markets and pricing to climate.

"Precipitation and temperature patterns between seasons are becoming more extreme. Whether it's a moisture deficit or excess, or heat stress, seasonal weather conditions are becoming unpredictable, and as a research community we are exploring how to respond through crop development and management practices for continued yield improvements."



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Kristen MacMillan is a research agronomist with the University of Manitoba, studying best management practices and cropping systems for soybeans, dry beans and peas. She also farms with her family near Marquette.

Her research is also examining ways to improve nitrogen fixation in dry beans. Legumes — protein-rich seeds — have the unique ability to produce their own nitrogen, but dry beans have relatively low nitrogen fixation, meaning farmers rely on fertilizer. MacMillan is now asking whether dry beans can fix more nitrogen, and early research suggests they can.

She expects this work will help make cropping systems more sustainable by reducing fertilizer use and improving long-term soil health.

Balancing life as a researcher, farmer and mother can be challenging, MacMillan said, but it is made easier by her passion for all three roles and shared priorities with her husband.

"As farmers, we approach it as a lifestyle," she said. "I am passionate about all aspects, and I'm fortunate to have the opportunity to blend them together. Seasonally, I need to realign priorities to support farming and family life, but that also adds value to my other roles."

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Continued on page 15

Local companies recognized in Innovation Showcase

By Lorne Stelmach

Three local companies were honoured as Innovation Showcase winners at the recent Manitoba Ag Days in Brandon.

The event featured 28 new products or services in seven categories, and the south-central region was well represented.

In the agricultural equipment category, the CornerStone planter ready row unit created by North Valley Precision Planting located in the Homewood area earned top honours.

Representative Andrew Kippen said it came from a fairly basic idea to help producers.

"We wanted to showcase what North Valley can do with old equipment, so we rescued an old planter ... stripped it down, painted it and made a bunch of different adaptors and mods to fit with all the new tech," he said.

They then took the idea further and created a blueprint for installing it onto equipment.

"We mentioned it to a couple of customers who are actually on the Ag Days board, and they said that's a real innovation there and you should showcase it," said Kippen.

"The whole idea is if you're happy with what you have today, let's retrofit and customize and make it fit," he added.

He said there has been a lot of good positive response so far.

"It might not be a build we would do for everyone, but it kind of shows that you can take something that's 50 years old and make it into something that's new," said Kippen. "New equipment is not cheap ... so this is an option for guys who kind of want the new tech but don't want to spend that kind of money."

In the farm safety category, the fence

line mower created by R-Tech Industries, also in the Homewood area, received accolades.

Representative Josh Hennan said their innovation also came from a fairly basic need, especially for cattle producers.

"If you have the grass get long and start touching the line, it will short it out, and it will lose its voltage," he explained. "Right now, people are just using weed whackers; that's the main way to do it ... but to go out and weed whack miles of fence line is a little crazy."

They created something that will do the job quicker and more efficiently for producers.

"It's a simple idea for sure, and they do exist in Europe, but it just seemed you couldn't really find them out here in North America."

He saw a need for this relatively straightforward innovation here in southern Manitoba especially, and he appreciates receiving the recognition.

"It's good. It gets our name out there It's especially about safety," he said.

Hennan said they have been receiving good initial response to their product.

"Here's some people who came to Ag Days just to look at it, so there is a need for it," he said, noting they only did testing over last summer and started taking orders at Ag Days.

Another honour in the agronomics category went to the Feed Eazy Pro 3020 tub grinder produced by Kanpar / Allagparts located in the RM of Stanley.

The tub grinder arose through a partnership with a company based overseas that had been distributing a model of a tub grinder.

"They decided they needed to beef



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The CornerStone planter ready row unit created by Homewood's North Valley Precision Planting earned top honours in the Manitoba Ag Days Innovation Showcase agricultural equipment category.

their machines up, so they designed their own unit and strengthened the areas where they had issues, and we were able to import these machines into Canada now at over \$20,000 savings over the competition," explained sales rep Todd Botterill.

"It's a stronger machine," he said, noting its advantages include not only its ruggedness but its price as well.

"Cattle producers looking to increase the quality of their feed and using vertical mixers might need stronger equipment and need up to an hour to an hour and a half to chew up a bale," he explained.

"So it's a lot of wasted time and horsepower ... with a tub grinder like ours, we can use a 170 to 200 horsepower, and it takes five minutes to chew up that bale."

"We're in a more competitive price point. It makes it more feasible for smaller operators to use this machine and improve their feed quality and

not spend as much to do it."

Botterill noted the Manitoba Ag Days is the perfect forum for companies like them to showcase what they can offer to producers.

"It's a great program that they have, and the publicity that we get from it helps a lot."

First-place winners in the showcase received \$500 and a \$1,000 advertising credit, while the runner-ups received \$250 and a \$500 advertising credit.

A spokesperson for Ag Days said it is always rewarding to see the level of innovation that Manitoba companies put in to making things easier and better for producers in the province.

"Farmers really want to see what is new and how it might work for them. They like the opportunity to see products first hand and ask specific questions," said Dwayne Leslie, Manitoba Ag Days innovation showcase committee chair.

> AGRONOMIST, FROM PG. 14

she works with and teaches. In addition to research, MacMillan educates the next generation of farmers and agronomists — a role she takes great pride in.

"I enjoy engaging with future farmers, sharing my stories and knowledge, and hearing their backgrounds and paths into agriculture," she said. "It's a chance for me to help advance their knowledge, giving them confidence as they take those practices back to their farms."

She values feedback from former students and farmers she has worked with, describing it as a "full-circle moment" when their paths cross again.

Remaining active on the farm is a priority for MacMillan, allowing her

to work hands-on with crops, develop new research ideas and test theories.

She describes that connection as "bridging the gap between farmers and researchers," forming practical and meaningful links between science and real-world farming.

For her, bridging that gap includes sharing research at events like Ag Days, publishing articles in agricultural magazines and showing students why continued investment in research matters.

"The sooner we can get information to farmers, the sooner we can improve our farming practices," she said.

She added that recent federal government announcements about closures to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada facilities — including the

research farm in Portage la Prairie, where she conducts studies — will create new challenges for research capacity. Even the closure of Stonewall's agriculture office more than 10 years ago has shaped the extension system in rural communities.

"Our rural economy relies heavily on agriculture, and it is a public investment," she said.

Looking ahead, MacMillan expects major technological and ecological advancements in agriculture. One study of particular interest to local farmers focuses on iron deficiency chlorosis (IDC) in soybeans and how crops respond in calcareous soils.

Farmers can now map soil properties and crop potential within individual fields, allowing for more precise management decisions, and part

of her work aims to explore how that technology can be used.

"Are soybean varieties best suited for IDC areas also maximizing yield in other parts of the field?" she said. "If we need to plant more than one variety, farmers now have the technology to map and plan for the best yield potential."

She hopes future cropping systems will be resilient to climate change and that farmers will remain flexible in adopting new practices.

Overall, MacMillan said she expects Manitoba's agriculture community to remain strong and looks forward to continuing her research in support of farmers.

Arborg Curling Club to celebrate 80th anniversary

By Kieran Reimer

The Arborg Curling Club is marking a milestone year in 2026, celebrating 80 years of curling, camaraderie and community spirit in the Interlake.

The anniversary coincides with the club's annual men's bonspiel, set for Feb. 27 to March 1 — an event known locally for its relaxed atmosphere, spirited competition and time-honoured traditions.

Along with three days of curling action, participants and spectators can expect plenty of socializing, cold beer and the club's famous pie auction — a highlight that has become a staple of bonspiel weekend and a fundraiser the community looks forward to each year.

"I'm glad the club is doing well," said club president Wes Jonasson. "I would hate to see it close like some of the other clubs in Manitoba, but we're hanging in there. We seem to keep getting good membership numbers right now, and it would be nice to see 100 years."

Founded in 1946, the Arborg Curling Club has long served as a gathering place through Manitoba winters, welcoming generations of curlers ranging from league regulars to weekend bonspielers. Over eight decades, the club has adapted to changes in the sport while maintaining the strong social culture that has made curling a cornerstone

of small-town life.

"Arborg has always produced a lot of good curlers over the years, and the younger generation seems to want to follow in those footsteps," Jonasson said. "We've been fortunate that it's a fun place to curl with lots of good times, and people keep wanting to come out."

Organizers say the men's bonspiel offers an opportunity not only to celebrate the season but also to recognize the volunteers, sponsors and members who have sustained the club for 80 years.

"Without them, there would be no club," said Jonasson. "It takes a lot of work, and there are a lot of good people helping out all the time. When we need help, we ask for it, and somebody always steps up."

The anniversary year will see the club honour its history while continuing to look ahead, with hopes of attracting new curlers and keeping the tradition strong for future generations.

Jonasson said he hopes future members will eventually take over the club and continue running it for decades to come.

Team sign-ups for the tournament are still underway and can be made by calling Jonasson at 204-641-1278.



Arborg to celebrate community heroes at annual volunteer gala

By E. Antonio

The Town of Arborg is rolling out the red carpet for a night of glitz, gratitude and community pride as it prepares to host its fifth annual Volunteer Recognition Gala on Saturday, March 21.

This year's theme, A Night of Stars, will shine a spotlight on the volunteers whose dedication and generosity help make Arborg a stronger, more vibrant community.

Chief administrative officer Cindy Stansell said the theme was chosen to "highlight the shining achievements of those who give so generously of their time and talent."

Planning for the gala is well underway by the Arborg-Bifrost Recreation Committee, with the event set to take place at the Arborg-Bifrost Community Centre. The gala was first established in memory of longtime volunteer Phil Bauernhuber, who passed away from cancer in 2021. His legacy lives on through the Phil Bauernhuber Fund, created to support fundraising efforts for more accessible community facilities.

"Phil was an incredible volunteer who supported many different organizations," said Stansell. "We honour his memory and lasting impact through this fund."

Thanks to proceeds from previous galas, the town has already completed several accessibility upgrades, including installing a lift, adding accessible doors, improving landscaping, creating a viewing platform and dedicating an accessible washroom at the curling rink. Funds raised this year will go toward further recreation facility upgrades and expansion.

Gala chair Kyle Foster said accessibility is impor-



The Town of Arborg's volunteer gala honours exceptional volunteers each year. Tickets are available in advance for the March 21 event by contacting committee chair Kyle Foster at 204-642-2168 or kyle@fosterag.ca.

tant in all walks of life.

"We recognize the importance of people with disabilities and their ability to access our facilities, whether it's young people or grand and great-grandparents who want to come and enjoy a social, hockey or curling game," he said. "Everyone should be able to enjoy our facilities."

Foster added the next stage of expansion will fo-

cus on developing new green space, including ball diamonds, soccer fields, picnic areas and "a host of other possibilities."

The evening will feature a champagne reception, catered dinner, live music and a late lunch, along with an awards ceremony recognizing six outstanding volunteers. A special youth award will also be presented to a volunteer aged 25 or younger, celebrating leadership, dedication and meaningful contributions to the community.

Foster said volunteerism is vital within Arborg and throughout the municipality.

"As any small tight-knit community, when volunteers work together, you see results. You get to see improvements to your community, meet new people, and a real sense of achievement," he said.

He said finding volunteers is becoming an increasing challenge, noting, "We need to celebrate the efforts of these volunteers and the organizations that give so much back to our community."

His goals for the evening are simple: to recognize Arborg's volunteers and raise money for a worthy cause.

Local businesses and organizations are encouraged to get involved through sponsorship opportunities.

"Sponsorship provides excellent visibility while helping us recognize the incredible contributions of our volunteers," said Stansell.

Ticket sales close once the event sells out or one week prior to the gala. Tickets are \$125 each or \$1,000 for a table of eight.

To purchase tickets or for sponsorship information, contact committee chair Kyle Foster at 204-642-2168 or kyle@fosterag.ca.

Gypsumville RCMP mark anniversary of fatal house fire



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Camray Baer, 24, whose death remains under investigation after a Feb. 7, 2025 house fire in Pinaymootang First Nation. Gypsumville RCMP continue to seek information one year later.

By Haley Cvar

Gypsumville RCMP are renewing their appeal for information one year after the suspicious death of a young man following a house fire in Pinaymootang First Nation.

On Feb. 7, 2025, at approximately 8:25 p.m., officers responded to a report of a house fire at a residence located off Highway 6 in the community. Two days later, the remains of 24-year-old Camray Baer were discovered in the debris.

Police say both the fire and Baer's death continue to be treated as suspicious.

"The Pinaymootang First Nation is a small, tight-knit community. Losing Camray at the young age of 24 is undoubtedly incredibly difficult for his family and for everyone who knew and loved him," said Sgt. James Demidiuk of Manitoba RCMP Major Crime Services. "The RCMP believe people in the community know what happened to Camray and are asking anyone with information to tell us what they know so we can move this investigation forward and help bring closure to Camray's loved ones."

Anyone with information is asked to contact Gypsumville RCMP at 204-659-5224, call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-8477 or submit a secure tip online at www.manitobacrimestoppers.com.

Falcons drop to sixth after late-season slide



EXPRESS PHOTO BY RAYME THOMSON

By Kieran Reimer

The Lundar Falcons will enter the Capital Region Junior Hockey League playoffs as the sixth seed after a difficult finish to the regular season.

Holding a chance to secure fifth place last week, Lundar instead dropped all three games on the schedule while the Arborg Ice Dawgs moved ahead in the standings.

The week opened Wednesday in St. Jean with a 7-4 loss to the league-leading St. Malo Warriors. The teams were close after one period before the Warriors broke the game open with four goals in the second.

Trailing 5-2 after 40 minutes and 7-2 early in the third, Lundar rallied late for a pair but couldn't close the gap. Liam Russell scored twice for the Falcons, while Dylan Care and Cristiano Almeida added singles. Goaltender Seth Hasker made 48 saves on 55 shots.

Lundar's hopes of claiming fifth place took another hit Friday in Arborg. The Falcons started well as Kade Laughlin and Jayden Dyck scored in the first period to give the visitors a 2-1 lead.

The Ice Dawgs responded decisively, however, scoring five times in the second period and once more in the third to claim a 7-2 victory and the fifth seed.

The Falcons' strongest performance of the week came Saturday in La Broquerie, where they earned a point in a 4-3 overtime loss to the Habs.

Care, Daniel Masters and Kolten Bell-Sinclair all scored in the opening period as Lundar led 3-2 after 20 minutes. The teams were otherwise even through the middle frame aside from a Habs goal that tied the

Lundar Falcons defenceman Morgan Mantik gets set for a rebound as goaltender Seth Hasker drops into the butterfly to make the save against the Arborg Ice Dawgs at Arborg & District Arena.

game at 3-3.

Luka Tetreault scored the overtime winner for La Broquerie. Dylan Leclair stopped 30 shots in defeat while Habs netminder Caleb Legal made 26 saves for the victory.

The loss left Lundar at 5-18-0-3-3 for

24 points in 29 games heading into its regular-season finale Tuesday, Feb. 17 against the St. Malo Warriors at 8 p.m. in St. Jean. Their playoff opponent will be determined following the final standings.

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Arborg Ice Dawgs secure fifth after big week



EXPRESS PHOTO BY RAYME THOMSON

Arborg Ice Dawgs forward Noah Smolinski celebrates after scoring twice in the second period to help power Arborg to a 7-2 win over the Lundar Falcons on Feb. 13 at Arborg & District Arena.

By Kieran Reimer

The Arborg Ice Dawgs strengthened their playoff position in the penultimate week of the Capital Region Junior Hockey League regular season.

Battling the Lundar Falcons for fifth place, Arborg collected seven of a possible nine points over three games — highlighted by a decisive victory over Lundar — to clinch the spot. The Ice Dawgs will now face either the La Broquerie Habs or the Selkirk Fisher-

men in the opening playoff round.

Arborg opened the week Monday with a 6-3 win over Selkirk at Arborg & District Arena. Brandon Burak and Tytan Johnson combined for 11 points in the victory, while Brody Maxwell and Noah Smolinski added two-point efforts.

Despite being outshot 30-24, Arborg capitalized on its opportunities, going a perfect four-for-four on the power play. Paxton Moore made 27 saves

Kodiaks close regular season

By Annaliese Meier

The Lundar Kodiaks finished the regular season 12th in the Winnipeg High School Hockey League's Price Division standings with a 2-20 record after a pair of road losses last week.

Lundar fell 13-1 to John Taylor on Feb. 11 before dropping a 10-0 decision to Warren the following night on

Feb. 12.

In the final standings, Niverville led the division with 63 points, followed by Lorette (61) and Warren (60), while Lundar finished with seven points.

The league now moves into the post-season, though a playoff schedule was not available prior to press time.

for the win while Selkirk goaltender Johnny Enns-Demchuk stopped 18.

The teams will meet again Friday, Feb. 20 in Selkirk in Arborg's 30th and final regular-season game.

The following night in Winnipeg, the Ice Dawgs dropped a tight 5-4 overtime decision to the North Winnipeg Satelites.

After a scoreless opening period, Brycen Johannesson and Burak scored in the second to keep the teams tied 2-2. North Winnipeg took the lead twice in the third period, but Arborg answered each time with goals from Burak and Maxwell to force overtime.

Arborg outshot North Winnipeg 2-1 in the extra frame, but Callum Laboo scored at 5:15 to secure the win for the Satelites. Moore finished with 36

saves in the 52-41 shots contest, while Jordan Armstrong turned aside 48 for North Winnipeg.

Arborg then returned home Friday and delivered its most important result of the week, defeating Lundar 7-2 to lock up fifth place.

After falling behind early, the Ice Dawgs scored six unanswered goals — including five in the second period. Smolinski and Dylan Woytowich each scored twice, while Bradley Kemkaran, Burak and Johannesson added singles.

The win improved Arborg to 7-17-0-2-3 for 28 points through 29 games. The Ice Dawgs close the regular season Friday at 7:30 p.m. at Selkirk Recreation Complex.

Athletics bring home the banner



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Arborg Athletics captured the Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association (MHSAA) Zone 5 championship with a 63-50 victory over the Warren Wildcats in Gimli on Feb. 12, capping an undefeated tournament run. They opened the tournament with a 56-34 win over the Fisher Branch Cougars, followed by a 67-57 victory against the Teulon Saints. In the semifinal, the Athletics edged the Gimli Vikings 65-57 to punch their ticket to the final, where they sealed the championship with another strong performance. With momentum firmly on their side, the Athletics now advance to the regional playoff in Warren on Feb. 21. The top two teams from regionals will earn a berth at the MHSAA AA provincial championship, set for Carman on March 12-14. Pictured, back row (left to right): Jason Skoropett (coach), Carter Buehlmann, Sullivan Naylor, Kolby Koomen, Mason Bardarson, Hayden Plett, Ty Shachta, Bohdan Kuzma, Tatum O'Neil and Audy Aballe; Front row: Locklin Pearce, Lucas Calderia, Harvey Jonasson and Eli Klym.

get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



Servings: 6
 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
 3 tablespoons lemon juice
 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
 1/2 teaspoon fresh minced garlic
 1 pinch salt
 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
 1 pound grilled or broiled boneless, skinless chicken breasts, chopped into small pieces
 2 cups halved or quartered red Grapes from California
 1/3 cup chopped red onion
 3 tablespoons cooked, crumbled ba-

Grape and Chicken Salad with Lemon-Balsamic Vinaigrette

con or packaged real bacon pieces
 1 large avocado, peeled, pitted and diced
 freshly ground pepper, to taste
 6 slices whole-grain artisan bread

In large bowl, whisk olive oil, lemon juice, vinegar, garlic, salt and basil. Add cooked chicken, grapes, onion and bacon.

When ready to serve, mix well then lightly stir in avocado and season with pepper, to taste. Serve with bread slices.

Tip: Salad may be prepared 1 day in advance and refrigerated in covered container.



Recipe adapted from "Spaceships and Laser Beams"
 6 ounces egg noodles
 1 cup peas (canned or frozen)
 2 cans (5 ounces each) light chunk tuna in water, drained
 1 can (10 1/2 ounces) cream of celery soup
 1/2 cup milk
 1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided
 1/2 teaspoon celery salt
 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped, plus additional for garnish (optional)
 nonstick cooking spray
 1/4 cup dry breadcrumbs
 2 tablespoons butter, melted
 Parmesan cheese

Tuna Noodle Casserole

Preheat oven to 350 F and cook egg noodles according to package instructions.

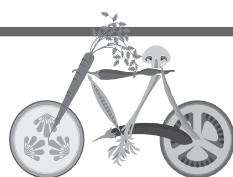
In large bowl, mix egg noodles, peas, tuna, soup, milk, 1 1/4 cups cheddar cheese, celery salt, pepper and 2 tablespoons parsley.

Spray 9-by-13-inch casserole dish with nonstick cooking spray and add tuna mixture. Cover with aluminum foil and bake 20 minutes until hot and bubbly.

While casserole is baking, mix bread crumbs and melted butter. Remove casserole from oven and top with breadcrumb mixture and remaining cheddar cheese.

Bake, uncovered, 5-10 minutes, until breadcrumbs are golden brown and cheese on top is melted. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and additional parsley, if desired, before serving.

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Susie Schwartz

By Susie Schwartz

So, we're well into a new year. (Ten months 'til Christmas! Sorry. Too soon?) Did you make any New Year's resolutions? If so, I hope they're going well. If not, don't sweat it! Any moment can be a new beginning. You don't need Jan. 1 to start again!

If you didn't resolve to improve your life, I'm here to encourage you to do so—starting now. But probably not in the way you think. I don't buy into societal pressures to do more, eat differently, get a gym membership, blah, blah, blah. (Those aren't bad things, but you won't be successful just by setting a goal because everyone else is. And remember... there's nothing magical about Jan. 1. You have to really want it.)

Okay, so what am I proposing?

Do more of what you love.

On the Harvard Health Publishing website, it says: "A study published online Sept. 11, 2023, by Nature Medicine suggests that having a hobby is good for your health, mood, and more."

Lately, when I'm feeling stressed, anxious, or even bored, I turn to painting. With jazz or acoustic pop covers playing in the background, getting my hands (and arms, and face!) dirty, and creating something from nothing—even if it's not beautiful or technically good—calms me. (Thank goodness I use acrylic paint! Once I bought a tube of oil paint by accident, and it was a permanent disaster. I had to wait for my skin to shed to get it all off!) This activity can only help my hypersensitive nervous system, which causes me all sorts of physical pain.

Yes, I believe that a passion or hobby can improve not only our mental well-being, but our physical well-being as well.

Do you love to read? Get any new books for Christmas? (Okay, if Aunt Sally gave you yet another Danielle Steel novel, you have my permission to buy whatever new book you fancy.) Take whatever time you can to tuck into that book. Did someone give you a Christmas card with flower seeds attached? (They do that over here in England, at least.) Try gardening—you might just love getting dirt under your fingernails. Did you get a puppy? (Oh, I hope so!) Take an online dog-training course focused on games and tricks. You'll probably both love it.

So, do more of what you love. Your body and mind will thank you.

Less health stress, yes?

A published author and musician, Susie currently lives in the UK. Find her on Instagram @authorsusieschwartz and at www.lesshastress.com. (Email: info@lesshastress.com.) She is the author of Help the Doctor Help You: 41 Secrets and Tips for Self-Advocacy to Get the Best from Your Appointments.



3 scoops vanilla ice cream
 1/2 cup milk
 1/3 cup cream of coconut
 2 tablespoons sweetened flaked coconut

Coconut Cream Pie Milkshake

1 whole graham cracker
 whipped cream, for garnish
 graham cracker crumbs, for garnish
 In blender mix ice cream, cream of coconut, flaked coconut and graham cracker on high until smooth. Pour into glass. Top with whipped cream and graham cracker crumbs.

Recipe adapted from MilkMeansMore.org.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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

Notice is hereby given that a copy of the VOTERS LIST may be revised at 30 Tache Street in Fisher Branch, MB between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. At this time staff will be available to update the voters list by:

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

VOTER ELIGIBILITY:

A person is eligible to have their names added to the Voter's List if they are:

- a Canadian citizen and at least 18 years of age on election day; and
- a resident of the local authority for at least 6 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 Senior Elections Official 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 Senior Elections Official 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 Senior Election Official may select.

APPLICATION FOR PERSONAL SECURITY PROTECTION:

A voter may apply in writing to the Senior Election Official 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 Wednesday, October 28, 2026.

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER OF the Estate of Cheryl Lynn Lamontagne, late of the Rural Municipality of Gimli, in Manitoba, deceased.

All claims against the above estate, duly verified by statutory declaration, must be filed with TAYLOR McCAFFREY LLP, at their offices at 2200-201 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 3L3, Attention: Diana C. King on or before March 18, 2026, after which date, the estate will be distributed having regard only to claims of which the Executor then has notice.

DATED at the City of Winnipeg, in Manitoba, the 18th day of February, 2026.

TAYLOR McCAFFREY LLP
Diana C. King Solicitor for the Executor of the Estate of Cheryl Lynn Lamontagne



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:

- adding the names of voters who are entitled to have their names on the list;
- deleting the names of persons who are not entitled to have their names on the list; and
- 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:

- a Canadian citizen and at least 18 years of age on election day; and
- 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.

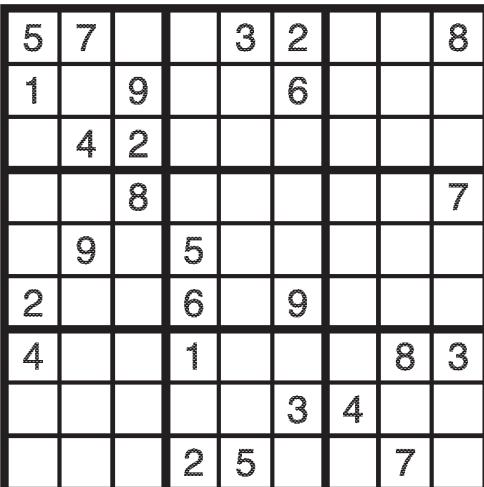
All changes to the voters list must be completed by September 20, 2026 in preparation for the municipal election to be held on Wednesday, October 26, 2026.

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

take a break

> GAMES

SUDOKU



Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

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!

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Cut quickly
- 5. A way to state clearly
- 11. River in NE Scotland
- 14. Expansive
- 15. Lacking social polish
- 16. Amount of time
- 17. Frame
- 19. Automobile
- 20. Toadstools
- 21. High school dances
- 22. Utilize
- 23. Experimented with
- 25. One-sided
- 27. Acquisitive
- 31. Potted plants
- 34. Everyone has one
- 35. Kalahari Desert lake
- 38. Unidentified flying object
- 39. People 65 and over
- 41. Small amount
- 42. Daughter of Acrisius
- 44. Ornamental box
- 45. Government agents
- 46. Uncertain
- 49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
- 51. Treeless plains
- 55. One's sense of self-importance
- 56. Consumer advocate

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

ADULT COUNSELLOR

Lakeshore Family Resource Centre @Ashern

Full-time (37.5 hrs/week) Permanent position providing counselling and support services to individuals impacted, or at risk of gender-based violence.

Also providing assistance to access appropriate resources, programs and referrals.

Qualifications:

- Education and experience in social services sector, with good understanding of the complex nature of gender-based violence. Equivalent training/experience will be considered.
- Strong written/oral communication skills, with ability to work both independently or team setting.
- Current clear criminal/vulnerable sector record check; child abuse registry check; adult abuse registry check.
- Valid driver's license; provide their own safe, reliable vehicle.

Deadline for applications: February 27th/2026. Please submit resume with 3 references to Hiring Committee via email lwrcthird@gmail.com

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

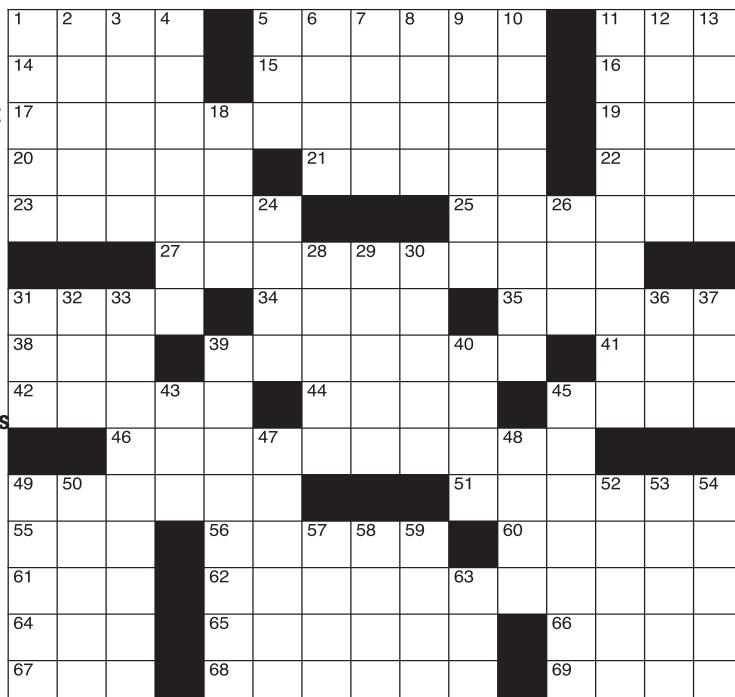
CROSSWORD

60. Type of lounger

- 61. Body part
- 62. Can be persuaded
- 64. Woman (French)
- 65. Ready and willing to be taught
- 66. Arab ruler title
- 67. Unhappy
- 68. Gradually went away
- 69. Able to think clearly

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Brushed
- 2. Small water spirit (Germ.)
- 3. Heroes
- 4. Monetary units
- 5. Some don't want to share theirs
- 6. Free-swimming invertebrate
- 7. Litigates
- 8. Outer
- 9. Parallelograms
- 10. Uneasy feelings
- 11. Cross
- 12. A way to remove
- 13. Pages can be dog—
- 18. Ukrainian city
- 24. A citizen of Denmark
- 26. Month
- 28. Hindu queens
- 29. Group of chemicals
- 30. Rider of Rohan
- 31. Wet dirt
- 32. Southwestern Russia city
- 33. Observed
- 36. Angry
- 37. Drivers' licenses
- 39. Musical composition
- 40. Auction
- 43. They __
- 45. Women
- 47. Be filled with love for
- 48. Thick-soled sock
- 49. Appears
- 50. Old World lizard



52. The leading performer

- 53. Protein
- 54. "Gunga Din" script writer
- 57. Art __, around 1920

58. __ Blyton, children's author

- 59. Abnormal breathing
- 63. A place to rest



NOTICE OF VOTERS LIST / PERSONAL SECURITY PROTECTION TOWN OF WINNIPEG BEACH

Notice is hereby given that a copy of the VOTERS LIST may be revised at:

Town of Winnipeg Beach Office at 29 Robinson Avenue, between January 21 and June 11, 2026 between the hours of 8:30 am. and 4:30 pm. Please call to confirm a time.

At this time the Senior Election Official (SEO) 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 his or her name added to the Voters List if he or she is:

- 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.

APPLICATION FOR PERSONAL SECURITY PROTECTION:

A voter may apply in writing to the SEO (at the address / email below) no later than June 11, 2026 to have his/her 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 email and must include your name, address and include proof of identity.

All changes to the voters list must be completed on or before June 11, 2026.

Dated at Town of Winnipeg Beach in the Province of Manitoba, on February 12, 2026.

B. Leah McIsaac
Senior Election Official (SEO)
Town of Winnipeg Beach
Box 160, Winnipeg Beach, MB R0C 3G0
Ph. (204) 782-2146
Email: seo@winnipegbeach.ca

www.mcna.com

Announcements

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IN MEMORIAM



Joseph E. Skibinsky
February 10, 1925 - February 18, 2023
In loving memory of our dear
husband, father, Papa, uncle, and friend
He is remembered everyday with love by his
wife, Joyce, his children, grandchildren and
great-grandchildren.
Forever in our hearts and around our table.
We love you.

IN MEMORIAM

Clayton Brown

December 22, 1970 - February 20, 2023
Don't think of him as gone away,
His journey's just begun -
Life holds so many facets,
This earth is only one.
Just think of him as resting,
From the sorrow and the tears -
In a place of warmth and comfort,
Where there are no days or years.
Think how he must be wishing,
That we could know today -
How nothing but our sadness
Can truly pass away.
And think of him as living,
In the hearts of those he touched -
For nothing loved is ever lost,
And he was loved so much.

-Deeply loved and forever missed,
Your family



OBITUARY

Harry Einarson

December 19, 1937 - February 8, 2026

Our best Dad, Harry Einarson, passed away quietly in the early morning hours of February 8, 2026, following a brief illness. He leaves behind a family who loved him to bits and will miss him every day.

Harry was born at Winnipeg General Hospital on December 19, 1937 to Einar and Inga (Sigurdur). He was a devoted husband—with a few devilish qualities—a Dad, Pop (stepdad), brother, Afi, Long Afi, uncle, cousin, and a generous friend who was always willing to lend a helping hand. His words were often, “Whatever you need, Partner!”

Harry is survived by his wife of 35 years, Jeannie, and his children: Janice Penziwol (Ron), Terri Einarson-Mollot (Phil), Shelley Turner, Daun Turner (Mike), and Glenn Turner. He was a proud Afi to Derian Penziwol (Alyssa), Sam and Beck Mollot, and a very proud Long Afi to his great-grandson, Lawson Penziwol. He was very proud of his children and all of their accomplishments.

Harry was predeceased by his first wife, Jean (Hogg), with whom he raised his two daughters Janice and Terri; his beloved parents, Einar and Inga (Sigurdur); his brother, Peter; his uncles Stoney, Baldur, and Pete; and his cousins Siggy, Young Stoney, and Franklyn.

Harry was very proud to be an ironworker and a longtime member of Ironworkers Local 728, Winnipeg. Known in the ironworker community as “Jelly Bean,” he valued the camaraderie of the trade and the many friendships he built and carried throughout his life.

Harry raised his girls to homestead, teaching them self-reliance and resilience. They learned to camp in remote places and to catch and clean whatever they harvested — whether fish or rabbits. While other kids got bikes, Harry’s girls got horses. He was a lifelong mentor who believed strongly that every self-respecting nine-year-old should know how to drive — and, of course, that meant learning on a stick shift.

Weekends were rarely quiet. They were filled with cousins, snowmobiling, rolling barrels, tending to farm animals, and all the unforgettable farm-life shenanigans that became the foundation of countless family stories. All the girls’ friends from miles around quickly learned the rhythm of life with Harry: work hard, play hard, and show up for each other.

Harry found great joy on his beloved family farm. There were donkeys, sheep, llamas, rabbits, emus, pigs, and chickens—sometimes all at once. If it could be raised, Harry raised it.

Harry was the definition of a patient mentor — steady, practical, and quietly wise. He taught through example. Those lucky enough to learn from him will forever hear his reassuring words: “Them’s the breaks, Kid.”

He loved spending time in “the building,” where neighbours, friends, and family often gathered. There was usually a story being told, a project on the go, and always an offer of “beer or shot.” Family ties meant everything to Harry. He shared a close bond with his cousin Siggy, who was one of his best friends. Siggy’s son, Troy, with whom he was close, along with his wife Leah, and their boys Eric, Cameron, and Luke, spent many happy hours at the farm with Harry and Jeannie. He and Cam (Cammie) Kumps shared a respect and easy friendship which often, involved fixing (Harry’s golf cart), building something (a chicken plucker!), a cold beer and good chatter. “Tell me some lies, Kid!” He appreciated his neighbours Brian and Tabby Johannesson and their kids -- a constant support and entertainment watching the kids grow up.

In their retirement years, Harry and Jeannie enjoyed taking drives around the Interlake, working their big garden, often planting more than they could use to share with friends and family. They were true partners and best friends.

As per his wishes, cremation will take place and a private family celebration of Harry’s life will be held at a later date.

The family extends sincere thanks to Dr. Michelle Matter, Dr. Warkaa Mohammed, and all the nursing and support staff at Johnson Memorial Hospital for their compassionate end-of-life care. To the Ambulance and Fire Services (Chief Mike Chudd) for their professional hometown care supporting the community. To the Home Care team and nurses for their kind care. It takes a community and we are grateful.

In lieu of flowers, Harry asks that you remember the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba. “Thanks Partner”. We’ll miss you so much. Thank you for being ours.

Memorial tribute can be sent to www.neilbardalfuneralhome.com



204-949-2200

Gimli 204-642-7124

neilbardalinc.com

OBITUARY

Zenneth Chwartacki (nee Chreptyk)
September 27, 1933 - February 7, 2026

Peacefully and with great sadness we announce the passing of Zenneth Chwartacki aged 92 years, on Saturday, February 7, 2026 at the Betel Home, Gimli, MB.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

The family would like to thank the staff of Gimli Betel for the great care for our mother.

Tributes: www.gilbartfuneralhome.com



Gilbart Funeral Home,
Gimli in care of arrangements.

OBITUARY

Kimberly Dawn Jonasson

It is with deep sorrow, the family of Kimberly Dawn Jonasson, 50, of Oak Bluff, Manitoba, announce her passing on January 26, 2026.

Kim will be lovingly remembered by her devoted partner Don Wood, fur baby Leo, family and friends.

Kim is survived by her parents Bill and Karen Jonasson; sisters Jamie (Jas) Atwal and Tara (Jarrod) Malenchak; nieces Aniya, Raina, Emily; nephews Xavier, Zach; grandmother Ella Stolar, many aunts, uncles and cousins.

Kim was known for her compassion, commitment and excellence in her work as a speech-language pathologist. Kim’s authentic joy in helping children and her ability to connect with people left a lasting impression on everyone who knew her.

A Celebration of Kim’s Life will take place at Gilbart Funeral Chapel, 309 Eveline Street in Selkirk, Manitoba on February 28, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. The service will be livestreamed via a link in her obituary at www.gilbartfuneralhome.com.

In lieu of flowers, a charitable donation may be made to The Kim Jonasson Memorial Fund (please ensure Kim’s fund name is entered when making a donation) in association with the Westshore Community Foundation Inc. of Gimli, Manitoba. (www.westshorefoundation.ca)

Don and the family would like to thank Kim’s Radiologist/Oncologist Dr. Cooke and her Palliative Care Dr. Cornelius Woelk and Nurse Marnie Cormier for their steadfast care.

Kim will be forever loved and remembered by all who knew her.

Tributes: www.gilbartfuneralhome.com

Gilbart Funeral Home, Selkirk in care of arrangements.



OBITUARY

Audrey Ruth Russell

May 2, 1935 - February 12, 2026

Peacefully on February 12, 2026, Audrey Russell passed away at the Ashern Personal Care Home in Ashern, MB at the age of 90 years.

Audrey will be lovingly remembered by her brothers Lawrence, Larry, Ernie, John (Marion), Frank (Donna) and Greg (Sylvia), sister-in-law Darlene along with numerous special nieces and nephews.

Audrey was predeceased by her parents Frederick William and Elsie, brothers Gary and Kenneth and sisters-in-law Dianne and Marjorie.

Cremation has taken place and a memorial service will be held at a later date which will be announced closer to that time.

Many thanks to the doctors, nurses and staff at the Ashern Personal Care Home and Lakeshore General Hospital for their compassionate care of Audrey.

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

Classifieds Announcements

OBITUARY



Alfred Edward Weigelt

June 13, 1939 – February 11, 2026

After a very brief illness, Alfred Weigelt passed away at the age of 86 years.

In the early 60's, Uncle Alfred went from a Commercial cow herd to Purebred Polled Herefords. He was a member of the Manitoba Hereford Association and sold many bulls province wide and made many lifelong friends along the way. He went back to a Commercial Black Angus herd in later years.

In his younger years, he participated in many curling bonspiels.

His love for his animals and farm was evident by the way he took such good care of his cows and horses. He made several hundred bales this past 2025 haying season and was so proud that he was able to keep working in his 86th year.

He will be missed and fondly remembered by his nephew Bert (Bev) Klatt; grand nephew and grand niece Paul Klatt and April Billingsley; niece-in-law Nyla Klatt; grand nephew and grand niece Mark Klatt and Joanne Wood.

Uncle Alfred was predeceased by the love of his life Audrey McQuigge, brother-in-law Bill Klatt and nephew Dan Klatt along with other family members.

A private family graveside funeral service was held at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 in the New Home Cemetery in the RM of Grahamsdale, MB.

Arrangements by:
ARNASON FUNERAL HOME

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OBITUARY

Josephine "Josie" Williams (née Jolly)

The family of Josephine Williams sadly announces her passing on February 14, 2026. Josephine passed away surrounded by the love and care of her family at the age of 88.

Josephine was born on December 5, 1937, in Carlisle, England, to Howard and Allison Jolly. She was one of four children and was lovingly raised alongside her siblings, Ian, Judy, and Valerie.



In 1953, she met her future husband, Peter, at the Crown Miter Dance. Peter proposed to Josephine on Valentine's Day in 1954, and they were married on January 23, 1958. Together they shared 68 wonderful years of marriage filled with love, devotion, and treasured memories. Peter and Josie welcomed their first son, Paul, in 1958. Their second son, Mark, followed in 1959, and in 1961 their family was completed with the arrival of their daughter, Deborah.

Josie and her family lived in Carlisle, England; Dumfrieshire, Scotland; Roblin; Winnipeg; and eventually settled in the Meleb area. Josie lived a life defined by hard work, generosity, and deep devotion to her family and community. She was a loving and kind woman who gave endlessly to others, always offering support with warmth, patience, and a gentle laugh. She worked tirelessly on the family farm throughout her life—milking cows, checking sheep, keeping the farm running smoothly, and ensuring that everyone and everything was cared for and well fed. Her quiet dedication shaped the strong and loving home she created.

Josephine also had a remarkable gift in the kitchen. She loved cooking and shared that passion professionally, managing a restaurant at Assiniboine Park and later managing the Oakwood Café in Winnipeg. Cooking was one of the many ways she expressed her love, and her meals brought family and friends together for many years.

Above all else, Josephine's greatest joy was her family. Her grandchildren and great-grandchildren were her pride and joy, and she loved them fiercely and wholeheartedly.

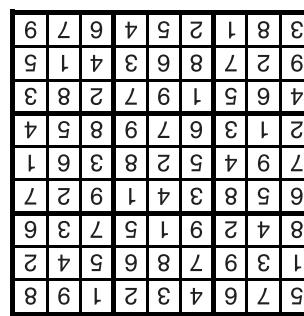
Josephine will be dearly missed and lovingly remembered by her devoted husband, Peter; her children, Mark and Deborah Mackenzie (Garry); and her cherished grandchildren and great-grandchildren: James (Kyleigh) and their son, Evan; Thomas (Leanna) and their children, Jacob and Amelia; Quinn Mackenzie (Lisa); Philip (Jessica) and their children, Arla, Nora, and Sawyer; and Rebecca Johnston (Finlay). She will also be fondly remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Josephine was predeceased by her beloved son, Paul.

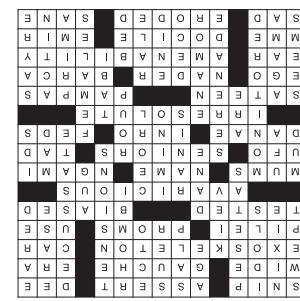
A funeral and celebration of Josephine's life will be held at Morweena Evangelical Mennonite Church on Saturday, February 21, at 2:00 p.m.

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Sudoku Answer



Crossword Answer

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