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Yes I Can! honour

EXPRESS PHOTO BY JENNIFER MCFEE

Yes I Can! Award recipient William Gall (left) of Alf Cuthbert School in Moosehorn stands with Jennifer Greigson, president of Manitoba's Council for Exceptional Children, during the 36th annual Yes I Can! Awards ceremony Feb. 26 at the Victoria Inn in Winnipeg. Gall was recognized for his achievements in school and community activities.

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# Yes I Can! Awards recognize exceptional Manitobans

By Jennifer McFee

A group of exceptional Manitobans earned recognition at an awards ceremony last week.

On Feb. 26, the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children hosted its 36th annual Yes I Can! Awards at the Victoria Inn in Winnipeg. The event also coincides with Inclusive Education Month, which takes place in February.

These awards aim to acknowledge the achievements of children and youth with exceptionalities and to overcome barriers or public misconceptions. The awards also encourage children and youth with exceptionalities to seek their highest potential while increasing awareness of the abilities, aspirations and personal qualities of people with exceptionalities.

Nominees could be recognized for achievements in academics, arts, athletics, technology, self-advocacy, school and community activities, and transition. Some Yes I Can! Award winners might also be selected as nominees for future international Yes I Can! Awards.

Teresa Yestrau, chair of the 2026 Yes I Can! Awards, said the nominations for each category opens in June with a submission deadline at the end of October. Schools across the province receive information about them.

A committee made up of volunteer educators reviews the nominations to determine eligibility and select winners. The winners are invited to the awards ceremony, along with their families, nominators, school principals, classmates, divisional



Scholarship recipient Julie Magnusson with presenter Amanda Asham, president of the Manitoba Association of Resource Teachers.



EA of the Year nominee Jennifer Darknell with Teresa Hampton, past president of Manitoba Council Exceptional Children.

special education representatives and anyone else who wants to celebrate these achievements. About 500 people attended the heart-warming event.

"The Yes I Can! Awards provide an opportunity to celebrate achievements for students who have to work incredibly hard to achieve the success that they do. We also celebrate those who make the stu-

dents' success possible," Yestrau said.

"There are many awards in the school system for academic excellence or athleticism. There are very few awards for those who do not fit those categories. This is a way for us to recognize the amazing

Continued on page 8



## Evergreen Staff Spotlight

*Celebrating the People Who Make Our Schools Work*

### Meet Lori Weber – Speech & Language Educational Assistant, Riverton Early Middle School

Lori Weber's journey with Evergreen began as a parent when her oldest child started school in 2009. From serving on the Parent Advisory Council, to volunteering in classrooms, to subbing as an Educational Assistant, Lori has steadily expanded her role in the division. In 2020, she became a full-time EA and Junior Kindergarten Instructor, and today she serves as the Speech and Language Educational Assistant at Riverton Early Middle School.

Her inspiration to work in education comes from her own childhood struggles with reading. "I was helped by a patient and kind volunteer who built my confidence as a reader," Lori recalls. "I strive to be that caring helper to each student I work with and to help them achieve their learning goals."

In her current role, Lori spends much of her day helping students with speech articulation. "I never realized how much goes into making a single sound – like 'r,'" she says. "Where your tongue needs to go, how to form it – it's fascinating." Working closely with Evergreen's Speech-Language Pathologist, she helps students meet individualized goals, one sound at a time.

The most rewarding moments for Lori are when students succeed after struggling. "Seeing a child finally say a sound correctly in words and conversation brings so much joy," she shares. "The pride and confidence it gives them is priceless."

For Lori, the people make Evergreen special. "We have such a great group of supportive and encouraging staff and amazing students who bring a smile to my face each day." She also values what public education makes possible: "It allows every child to access education and the resources they need. The little steps we take in learning each day make a big impact on a lifelong learning journey."

Thank you, Lori, for your compassion, dedication, and for helping Evergreen students find their voice and their confidence.

*Interviewed by and pictured with trustee Sandra Davies*





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# Lundar School wraps up I Love to Read Month

By E. Antonio

Lundar School wrapped up their "I Love to Read Month" celebrations with visits from two local police officers and a Grade 4 reading-inspired field trip to visit their senior pen pals.

Principal Tracy Parkes said their entire month was filled with literary-focused events. "We are incredibly fortunate to have such a dedicated and imaginative group of educators who organized and led these activities," she added. "Their creativity and commitment brought reading to life across our K-4 and 9-12 classrooms, with dress-up days, reading challenges, book swaps, and school-wide participation."

This year's I Love to Read Month committee members were, Breanna Malcolm, Halle Monkman, Leanne Dubowits, Chelsey Lowry, Hailey Milian and Ashley Monkman.



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Lundar School students wrapped up I Love to Read Month with special community connections, including visits from local police officers and a reading-inspired field trip for Grade 4 students to meet their senior pen pals.



## Westshore

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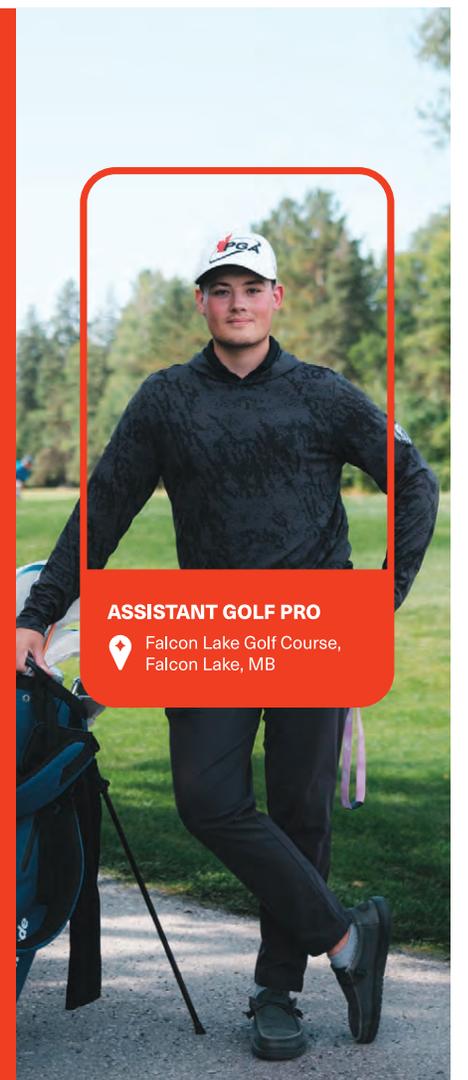
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## Clean Environment Commission posts hearing dates for Crystal Spring wastewater lagoon

Written submissions by April 7; presenters to apply by April 15

By Patricia Barrett

The Manitoba Clean Environment Commission (CEC) will be holding a public hearing over three days in April in Fraserwood on the Crystal Spring Hutterite colony's proposed wastewater treatment lagoon.

The provincial department of environment and climate change recommended last September that the proposed lagoon be reviewed by the CEC after initially deciding it wasn't necessary.

The CEC hearing is to take place in Fraserwood, about 17 kilometres west of Gimli on PR 231.

"The hearing has been scheduled to take place on April 21, 22 and 23, 2026 in Fraserwood and the Fraserwood Community Hall. Agendas for each session will be posted as they become available," states the notice on CEC's website. "There is an evening session scheduled for April 22 for public presentations."

The CEC was established under the provincial Environment Act in 1988 to allow the public to participate in the decision-making process with regard to the environment.

The CEC panel will be composed of chair Aimée Craft, professor in the

University of Ottawa's faculty of law; commissioner Lydia Carpenter, who owns and operates a cattle and live-stock business in Manitoba; and commissioner Donald Labossiere, former director of environmental compliance and enforcement at Manitoba conservation and water stewardship (former name of the environment and climate change department).

Individuals, groups or organizations that want to either present to the CEC panel or be a participant (presenters differ from participants) must register in advance.

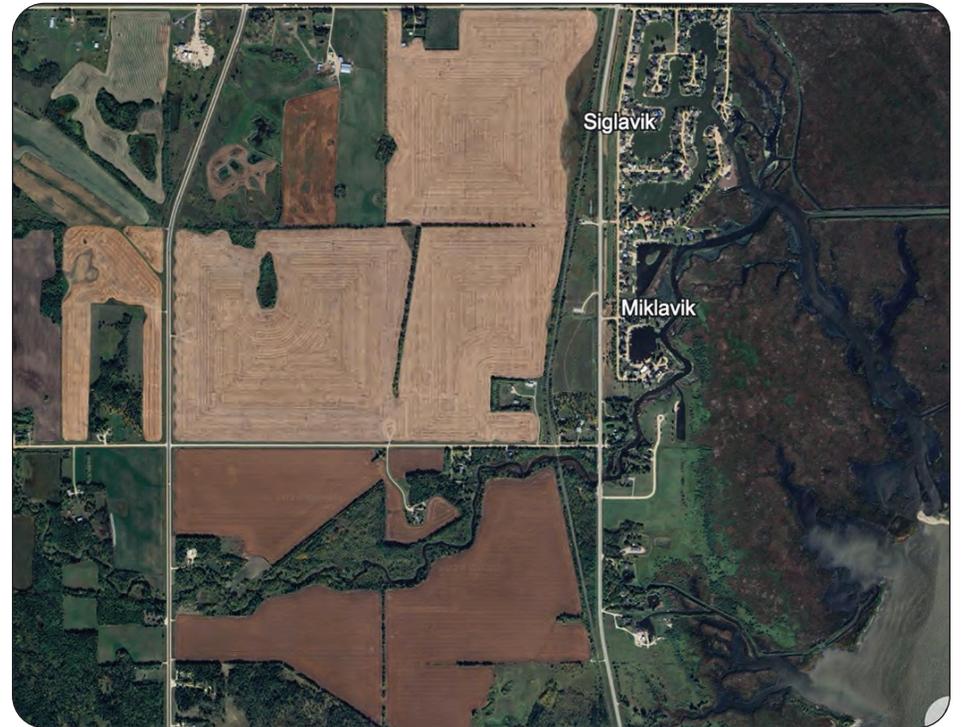
Presenters are asked to register before April 15 using the "Presenter Registration Form" on the CEC's website.

Guidelines for presenting are provided.

Presenters will be given 15 minutes to speak, but the panel chair may "reduce this time limit based on volume of registrations received to ensure that everyone who registers can speak."

Those who wish to make a submission in writing must do so by April 7.

People wishing to be participants must also register before the hearings begin by using the "Participant Application Form" on the CEC's website.



GOOGLE EARTH

Google Earth's view of the Miklavik and Siglavik residential subdivisions through which Willow Creek flows into the coastal wetlands and Lake Winnipeg. Effluent from Crystal Spring colony's proposed wastewater lagoon in the RM of Armstrong will run east through the RM of Gimli and be discharged into Lake Winnipeg.

Participants differ from presenters in that they can ask the proponent questions, provide expert advice or being their own expert opinion.

The CEC asks participants to familiarize themselves with the hearing process guidelines. It has posted "Process Guidelines Respecting Public Hearings" on its website.

Those who wish to make a written submission by April 7 can send their

letter by email: [cec@cecmanitoba.ca](mailto:cec@cecmanitoba.ca) or through the post to: Manitoba Clean Environment Commission, 305-155 Carlton St., Winnipeg, MB R3C 3H8

For more information about the Crystal Spring colony wastewater lagoon, including technical reports and letters of opposition, visit the public registry under the provincial department of environment and climate change and search for file 6193.

### The Workers Compensation Act Legislative Review

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*Westshore Community Foundation Inc. is seeking enthusiastic and collaborative Board members. Candidates should have experience in areas such as risk governance, marketing, event planning, and fundraising. The role requires a commitment of 4-6 hours monthly, including attendance at Board meetings. We encourage applications from individuals of diverse backgrounds and identities. This is a rewarding opportunity to contribute to community initiatives.*

# Mega Bounce brings high-energy fitness to Lundar



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Mega Bounce fitness classes will be held Tuesday evenings in March at the Lundar School gym. Advance registration is required by emailing [rec.coldwell@mymts.net](mailto:rec.coldwell@mymts.net) to participate in the low-impact, high-energy workout sessions.

By E. Antonio

Get ready to rebound into fitness as Mega Bounce classes arrive in Lundar for the first four Tuesdays of March.

Two sessions will run each evening at the Lundar School gym: a kids' class for ages six to 12 from 5:30 to 6 p.m. at \$5 per class, followed by a 13-plus session from 6 to 7 p.m. at \$20 per class.

RM of Coldwell recreation director Breanna Malcolm said she is excited to introduce the upbeat program to the community.

"We are always looking for ways to enhance our recreation programming," she said. "It's an added bonus when we are able to find people to lead programs who are from right here in the Interlake."

The sessions will be led by Bounce Body Fit-certified Meagen Hildebrand, owner of the mobile Teulon-based Mega Bounce.

"This workout is like no other," Hildebrand said. "It's actually fun, and everyone who tries a class leaves smiling."

Participants bounce along to upbeat music for a full-body workout, with each song targeting a different muscle group — including arms, legs, abs

and pelvic floor — while also building endurance and cardiovascular fitness.

Hildebrand said classes are suitable for all skill levels, with participants encouraged to move at their own pace. Handlebars are available for those who would like additional balance support.

Bounce classes offer a variety of benefits, she added, including improved coordination and circulation, mood-boosting effects and a low-impact workout that is easy on the joints.

"The love and the support in the room is like no other," she said. "Get ready to bounce all the stress away."

All equipment is provided. Participants are asked to bring comfortable workout clothing, water, a towel and, if needed, a supportive sports bra.

Malcolm said community participation will be key to the pro-

gram's success.

"If we want to see more recreation opportunities in our area, we need to engage with them when they are offered," she said. "The more interest we have, the bigger push it gives us to offer more activities in the future."

Advance registration is required, and each session must reach a minimum of 12 participants to run. To register, email [rec.coldwell@mymts.net](mailto:rec.coldwell@mymts.net) and indicate which dates you wish to attend and whether you are signing up for the kids' or adult class.

## GROW OUR OWN SCHOLARSHIP

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  - 2nd essay: 500 words on either an innovation, safety measure, or community service or activity that you feel would benefit the Interlake and how you would propose making that happen.

INTERESTED STUDENTS SHOULD EMAIL [JODI.LEEKAEMINGK@VIDIR.COM](mailto:JODI.LEEKAEMINGK@VIDIR.COM) FOR A COPY OF THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION



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# A quiet moment together: Stonewall therapist turns connection into colouring book

By Annaliese Meier

Stonewall therapist and mother Amy Friesen knows firsthand how overwhelming big emotions can feel for children — and how much they rely on trusted adults to help them feel safe.

That understanding is what led Fri-

esen to create *Together in Calm*, a printable parent-and-child co-regulation colouring book designed to help families slow down, connect and navigate emotions together.

The idea began taking shape while Friesen was on maternity leave, initially as a meaningful project to oc-



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Amy Friesen sits with her son during a colouring activity, reflecting the co-regulation approach behind her parent-and-child resource *Together in Calm*.

cupy her time. But it quickly grew into something deeper, drawing from both her professional work with children and teens and her experiences at

Continued on page 7

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## > QUIET, FROM PG. 6

home with her own boys.

"In my practice, I was consistently seeing children with big feelings who needed simple, shared ways to process them with their caregivers," Friesen said. "At the same time, with my seven-year-old, I noticed how much he craved my presence when he was working through emotions — not just my help or instruction."

Rather than one defining moment, Friesen said the book emerged from many small, everyday experiences: sitting beside her son while he coloured, slowing down together at bedtime or staying calm during difficult moments. Those moments reinforced for her how powerful simple connection can be — especially in a world filled with distractions.

"With increased work demands and the constant pull of phones and screens, it's easy to miss just how much kids crave our attention and presence," she said. "I wanted to create something tangible that gently invites families to pause, set aside distractions and simply be with their children."

While there are many tools available to teach children coping skills, Friesen noticed most place the responsibility on children to regulate their emotions independently. She felt something important was missing.

"There are many wonderful resources, but they often focus on what the child should do on their own," she said. "What I was seeing is that kids don't just need strategies — they need reassurance, presence and co-regulation with a trusted adult."

Co-regulation, she explained, is especially important for younger children whose brains and nervous systems are still developing. When children experience repeated moments of being soothed and supported by a calm adult, they gradually learn how to regulate their own emotions over time.

"When a parent stays close, speaks calmly and sits with their child through big emotions, the child learns those feelings aren't dangerous and that they don't have to face them alone," Friesen said. "That experience literally helps shape how their brain learns to handle stress."

Each page of *Together in Calm* pairs a cozy animal colouring sheet for children with a simple guidance page for parents, offering gentle prompts such as noticing body sensations or taking slow breaths together. Families are encouraged to colour side by side, with conversation unfolding naturally — or not at all.

"The focus isn't on doing it right," Friesen said. "It's about shared presence. Sometimes there's talking, sometimes there isn't, and both are OK."

The book is best suited for children between the ages of four and 10 and is designed to be used together during calm moments, bedtime wind-downs or when emotions begin to feel overwhelming.

Although the book is still new, early feedback has been encouraging. One parent told Friesen the activities helped them slow down during a stressful moment and respond with calm connection instead of frustration — a response that stayed with her.

"That really reminded me that sometimes the simplest tools can make a meaningful difference," she said.

The project closely reflects Friesen's therapeutic approach at Stonewall Counselling Center, where she prioritizes empathy, relationship-based support and creative, play-based methods to help children feel safe with their emotions.

"This book isn't about fixing children or pushing better behaviour," she said. "It's about understanding, connection and presence — and helping families bring those values into everyday life."

Above all, Friesen hopes families who use *Together in Calm* walk away feeling closer to one another.

"Kids just want to feel seen, heard and safe," she said. "Life gets busy, stress builds and our attention gets pulled in a hundred directions. That doesn't make anyone a bad parent — it's just reality."

Her hope is that even a few minutes spent colouring together can give families permission to slow down and reconnect.

"If there's one feeling I'd love families to leave with, it's that quiet sense of warmth and closeness," she said. "That feeling of sitting side by side and knowing, we're in this together."

*Together in Calm* is available as a digital download on Etsy, allowing families to print and use the pages at home. Friesen said families who prefer not to order through Etsy can also contact her directly by email to arrange access.



The *Together in Calm* colouring book invites families to pause, connect and regulate emotions together.

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THE EXPRESS WEEKLY NEWS

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**OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS**



## > YES I CAN AWARDS, FROM PG. 2

amount of work that the students or staff have put in to be successful.”

MCEC supports people who are working to advance effective practices in providing services to youth with exceptional needs. This includes teachers, educational assistants, resource teachers, pre-service teachers and anyone working in the field of special education.

“We are a chapter of the larger Council of Exceptional Children. We work collaboratively with school divisions, government, support agencies and associations with the same focus,” Yestrau said.

“We run an annual provincial conference during the same dates as Yes I Can! as well as sessions during MTS PD Day and other professional development at universities or local areas where requested.”

During the awards ceremony, the presentation also included recognition for MCEC Teacher of the Year Award, the MCEC Education Assistant of the Year Award, the Outstanding Educator of the Year Award and the MCEC Outstanding Achievement Award.

“I have had the opportunity to attend Yes I Can! Awards at the provincial and international level. Manitoba’s awards are the best I have ever attended,” she said. “They are the most positive, inclusive and respectful event you will ever attend. Once you attend, you will see how the people in the room that evening will touch your heart.”

From Alf Cuthbert School in Moosehorn, Grade 8 student William Gall earned the Yes I Can! Award for School and Community Activities. Principal Alann Fraser nominated William, noting that he serves as an inspiration to everyone at the school.

“He has attended school here since preschool and has been a bright spot for each of us for all these

years. William lives with autism spectrum disorder. He deals with a variety of challenges ranging from communication to movement,” Fraser said.

“William comes to school happy; his infectious laugh is heard throughout the school and brings a smile to students and staff alike. William certainly shows all of us his determination and perseverance in daily life activities.”

William participates in as many aspects of Alf Cuthbert School life as possible, Fraser added. Some of his responsibilities include making popcorn weekly for the school, counting money, shopping, washing dishes from the breakfast program, as well as washing, folding and putting away towels.

“He has taught staff and students how to slow down and approach things differently,” Fraser said. “William also serves as an example that with great determination, you can accomplish anything with or without support.”

In addition, Fraser also nominated education assistant Jennifer Darknell for the EA of the Year Award, which was won by Dayna Trann of West Kildonan Collegiate.

“Jennifer is a remarkable EA and individual. Her passion is helping students to learn and become the best people possible. She connects with all students but especially those who have difficulties due to disabilities or life circumstances. Jennifer is always prompt and timely with her attendance as she understands the need for consistency for all our students,” Fraser said.

“Over the years, Jennifer has shown her ability to be flexible, consistent, supportive and welcoming to staff and students. She is the first to jump in to help, even above and beyond the duties of an EA. She will take duties and cover high need students when

we are short staffed.”

As an example, Fraser said Darknell has stepped in during Roots of Empathy classes to teach students American sign language, which she learned through previous roles in other school divisions.

“She is observant and will join in on problem-solving opportunities as issues arise. Jennifer is an active support in classroom, outside, gym and individual settings. In her spare time, Jennifer researches ways to support students as well as learn new strategies and skills that benefit a multitude of students. She is an active member in PD and staff meeting opportunities. She is the first to jump into volunteering, will arrive early and leave late if she is needed,” Fraser said.

“The staff and students are extremely lucky to have someone such as Jennifer working at Alf Cuthbert School. Her work, dedication and compassion are unmatched.”

Fraser believes it’s important to recognize both staff and students at Alf Cuthbert School.

“Sharing true recognition is often difficult for people to give and to receive. We can say that we appreciate each other, but making a formal nomination to an award speaks more than just a verbal recognition. Both William and Jenn have worked hard, bring a special element to our school community and they should be recognized for that. There are not a lot of public recognition forums for people, especially in the rural areas,” Fraser said.

“Jenn has worked with William for most of his years at Alf Cuthbert School. They are a part of each other’s lives and have played a huge piece in the success that they each show. I am extremely proud to know both Jenn and William and to have them as part of the Alf Cuthbert School community. Congratulations to both Jenn and

Continued on page 9

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# Gimli offering stellar band lineup this summer

By Patricia Barrett

It's never too early to think about summer in Gimli and all the fun stuff on offer such as the beach, fish and chips, boutique shopping, festivals, theatrical productions and free musical entertainment.

From June to September, 16 bands are going to rock the bandstand at Gimli Harbour.

The RM of Gimli's tourism department finalized a lineup of free musical entertainment that includes Led-

dwyn, Two Crows for Comfort, Free Ride Band, The Bivvers and Pop Vegas.

Most bands are scheduled for the evening, but a few have afternoon shows.

Music lovers are invited to bring a tin for the bin to help support the Evergreen Basic Needs food bank.

For more details, call the RM's tourism clerk Allan Sulyma at 204-642-6655.



**More info at [www.gimli.ca](http://www.gimli.ca)**

**Always FREE just bring a Tin for the Bin!**

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- LEDDWYN - JUNE 20 730PM
- DARREN LAVALLEE - JUNE 21 1PM
- THE INCLINES MATINEE SHOW - JUNE 27 1PM
- B SIDE CHAMPS - JUNE 27 730PM
- TWO CROWS FOR COMFORT - JULY 1 7PM
- FREE RIDE BAND - JULY 1 8PM
- SEAN TAYLOR BAND - JULY 4 730PM
- VINYL REVIVAL - JULY 11 730PM
- THE BIVVERS - JULY 18 730PM
- DAMN STRAIGHT - AUG 8 730PM
- FOREVER AND ALWAYS WITH HEARTBREAKER - AUG 15 7:30PM
- THE NOONERS - AUG 22 730PM
- POP VEGAS - AUG 29 730PM
- THE GOODS SEPT 5 730PM
- FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK WITH RATTLESNAKE SUITCASE - SEPT 6 730PM




TWO CROWS FOR COMFORT WEBSITE

Two Crows for Comfort are scheduled to play the Gimli Harbour bandstand on July 1.



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## > YES I CAN AWARDS, FROM PG. 8

William."

In addition, Julie Magnusson, a Grade 12 student at Gimli High School, received an academic scholarship to pursue a career directly related to working with people with exceptionalities.

Magnusson stands out for her leadership roles, extracurricular sports and volunteer initiatives. These experiences provide her with the discipline, commitment and collaboration that are essential for working effectively with children.

Her goal is to become a speech-language pathologist.

Other Interlake-based award recipients include Carson Lowe of Teulon Collegiate Institute and Theodore Hill of Grosse Isle School, who both won Yes I Can! Awards for arts. Hayden Flett of Stony Mountain School was recognized with an academics award, and Brandi Roberts of Teulon Collegiate Institute was nominated for the EA of the Year award.

# Local athletes capture NCA national cheer title

By Lana Meier

Several local athletes are national champions after their team delivered a stunning performance at the NCA All-Star National Championship in Houston.

Competing in the U16 Level 2 Small division, Team Icons of Central Cheer entered Day 2 of the prestigious event sitting fifth overall before delivering a “hit zero” routine — meaning no deductions — to vault into first place with a score of 97.15 out of 100 and claim the championship.

The NCA All-Star National Championship is widely regarded as the world’s largest and most prestigious all-star cheerleading competition. Branded as “The Work Is Worth It,” the event typically features more than 1,300 teams and attracts over 65,000

attendees annually, bringing together athletes from more than 39 U.S. states and nine countries. Winners are awarded championship titles, jackets and the coveted Golden Megaphone trophy.

This year marked a milestone for Manitoba, as a team from the province competed at NCA for the first time.

Among the champions were Molly Beachell of Rosser, a high flyer; Arianna Manness of Stonewall, who competes in the base position; Roxanne Rulan of Matlock, a back spot; and coach Joan McNeilly of Selkirk.

Team Icons’ dramatic comeback on the national stage capped an unexpected but historic victory for the Manitoba squad.

EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Members of Team Icons won the U16 Level 2 Small division at the NCA All-Star National Championship in Houston, Texas last weekend. The Manitoba squad moved from fifth place after Day 1 to first overall with a hit-zero routine on Day 2. Pictured are coach Joan McNeilly of Selkirk (back row, far left), Arianna Manness of Stonewall (back row, beside McNeilly), Molly Beachell of Rosser (front row, far right) and Roxanne Rulan of Matlock (back row, fifth from left).



## Province’s \$10-million security rebate program for businesses gaining traction

By Patricia Barrett

The provincial government’s newly launched \$10-million program for businesses to enhance their security is starting to gain traction, with over \$1.3 million already dispersed.

The province launched a new Business Security Rebate Program late last year to help make businesses and communities safer.

The rebate is available to businesses with 75 or fewer employees per location.

Businesses can apply for up to \$2,500 per location to offset the costs of in-

stalling security equipment or repairing property damages. The program extends to upgrades or damages that occurred on or after Aug. 23, 2024.

“We came together with community stakeholders and our partners in the police to tailor this rebate to address the security needs of Manitoba businesses, workers and communities,” said provincial justice minister Matt Wiebe in a Dec. 11, 2025, news release.

Eligible security upgrades include the installation of security and doorbell cameras, alarm systems, motion

detectors, window protection, anti-graffiti film and paint, and security fencing and lighting.

Eligible repairs and expenses include fixing broken windows, broken doors and locks, insurance deductibles related to repairs, graffiti removal, replacement of signage and cash systems, and temporary boarding or fencing used to secure premises until permanent repairs can be made.

A provincial spokesperson told the *Express* the rebate program has dispersed over \$1.3 million so far.

“As of Feb. 19, a total of 754 Manitoba businesses have received a rebate through the new security rebate program,” he said, “and \$1,362,085 in funding has been dispersed.”

The province initially launched a security rebate program in June 2024 for renters and homeowners for security equipment.

Business owners can see a full list of eligible and ineligible expenses, as well as apply for security rebates, at: [www.manitoba.ca/justice/security-rebate.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/justice/security-rebate.html)

## Phishing scam impersonates Manitoba RCMP

By Lana Meier

Manitoba RCMP are warning the public about an elaborate online phishing scam in which fraudsters are impersonating police officers.

Police say the scam begins with a random text message or email sent to an unsuspecting individual. The message includes a link directing the recipient to join a video conference call with someone claiming to be a police officer.

If the link is clicked, the fraudster attempts to convince the individual they could be arrested unless they assist police by sending gift cards or bitcoin. In some cases, the caller claims

there is a warrant for the person’s arrest that can be removed if payment is made.

Over the past two weeks, dozens of individuals have reported being given the Manitoba RCMP’s general line phone number by scammers in an effort to appear legitimate.

Police stress the messages are fraudulent.

The RCMP will never send unsolicited texts or links asking the public to click on them. Anyone who receives such a message is advised not to click the link and to delete the text immediately.

Those who have clicked on the link or provided personal information during a fraudulent online meeting should contact their financial institution immediately and report the incident to their local police service and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre.

RCMP are also reminding the public to take precautions to avoid falling victim to online scams. Residents should avoid clicking on links or downloading attachments in unsolicited messages, never send personal or banking information in response to unexpected communications, and verify the source of any message be-

fore responding.

Police emphasize they will never ask members of the public to transfer money or make payments using cash, credit cards, gift cards or bitcoin; provide remote access to a computer; or share personal information such as date of birth, address or banking details by text message.

Anyone who suspects they have been a victim of fraud or cybercrime is encouraged to report it to their local police service and to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501 or online at [reportcyberandfraud.canada.ca](http://reportcyberandfraud.canada.ca).

# RM of Gimli hires new chief administrative officer

By Patricia Barrett

The RM of Gimli has hired a new chief administrative officer, who started the senior management job on March 2.

The RM appointed Diana Chapman, who lives in Sandy Hook.

In a notice dated Feb. 26, the RM said Chapman has over 20 years' experience in executive leadership. She previously served as senior vice-president of IT and project delivery at Princess Auto, and held senior leadership roles at Assiniboine Credit Union and Bell MTS.

"She is a strong, values-based leader known for building high-performing teams, strengthening governance and accountability, and delivering measurable results through thoughtful planning and disciplined execution," states the notice.

The RM has seen a number of chief administrative officers and other senior management staff come and go since the new council took office in 2022. The RM's latest CAO, DJ Sigmundson, was appointed in December 2025.

Chapman was quoted in the notice as saying she feels privileged to have been chosen to serve as Gimli's CAO.

"I am committed to strengthening municipal governance, supporting council's strategic direction, and ensuring our services remain responsive, transparent and sustainable," said Chapman. "I am proud to work alongside a dedicated council and a talented administrative team, and I am confident that together we are well positioned to build on our momentum."

The notice says Chapman has demonstrated a "collaborative leadership style" and "deep commitment" to service excellence.

"Her expertise in strategic planning, transformation and change management, program and project delivery, and operational improvement will support council's focus on strong governance, transparency and long-term sustainability for the RM of Gimli," states the notice.

Council extended its "sincere appreciation" to DJ Sigmundson, who before being appointed CAO, served as the RM special projects lead.

Other council news:

- Council reviewed a new organizational bylaw (No. 26-0002), which provides for the establishment of council committees or other bodies and an organizational structure for the municipality.

Two new oversight committees will be created: an audit committee and a governance committee. They will focus on "accountability, financial oversight and ensuring council follows best governance practices," according to a Feb. 25 meeting recap document publicly posted.

Council also reviewed a new procedure bylaw (No. 26-0003), which states that it supports the timely preparation of information, orderly debate (at council meetings) and "meaningful public access."

Meaningful public access is not specifically defined in the document but may refer to electronic meetings, public hearings and/or delegations.

The new bylaw states public delegations can assist council in decision-making, but they're not "intended to function as operational service meetings or complaint investigations."

- The RM posted a financial statement showing budget line revenues and expenditures, ending Dec. 31, 2025, under the general operating fund.

The full document is posted publicly under council's Feb. 25 agenda.

For total legal expenses, the RM overspent its budget by more than \$2.4 million. Its annual budget for legal was set at \$240,000 and it spent \$2,670,961 by the end of 2025.

For total administrative staff expenditures, the RM overspent by \$67,551. Its budget was \$1,105,542 and it spent \$1,173,094. For total office expenditures, the RM overspent by more than \$109,000. Its office budget was \$181,850 and it spent \$291,022.

For total road maintenance expenditures, the RM overspent by more than \$11,787. Its budget was \$939,500 and it spent \$951,287. For total public works equipment expenditures, the RM overspent by \$5,000. Its budget was 1,035,598 and it spent 1,040,624.

On the revenue side of things, the RM set a budget expectation for total taxes added revenues of \$150,000 but brought in \$195,305.

For total capital drainage levy revenues, the RM had expected \$22,000 but brought in \$71,513.

For total fines revenues, the RM expected \$17,950 but brought in \$61,594. There was no budget line set for total bylaw enforcement revenues, but the RM made \$12,279.

The RM presents a new budget in the spring.

- The RM posted publicly the Gimli Community Development Corporation's (CDC) financial statement ending Dec. 31, 2025.

The annual budget was expected to bring in revenues of \$358,356, but actual revenue was \$319,886, a difference of about \$38,469. Expenditures had been set at \$342,100, but \$362,664 was spent, a difference of \$20,564.

Oversight of the CDC was turned over the municipality after the CDC

held its annual general meeting in 2024, which showed losses of almost \$1 million. The board, which had been chaired by Mayor Kevin Chudd, resigned later that year after failing to secure the confidence of its sole shareholder, the municipality.

The CDC board is currently made up of councillors Kurt Reichert and Thora Palson, assistant chief administrative officer Kelly Cosgrove and Cheryl Buhler.

The RM posted CDC minutes from its January and February 2026 meetings, but the minutes provide no information as to what was discussed, and "new business" was held in camera.

- Council is supporting a request from the Gimli Chamber of Commerce, providing \$250 in sponsorship for its upcoming 2nd annual Heart of Business Awards. Council also authorized the purchase of a table.

- The RM received a request from the organizers of Hailey's Way Inc. Ice Fishing Derby, which will be held on March 7 in Gimli. The organizers requested \$500 in Gimli Gold for youth prizes. Gimli Gold is money that can be spent only at Gimli businesses.

- The RM didn't share a copy of CAO DJ Sigmundson's contract that was previously requested by the *Express*, and it didn't provide information about preauthorized Visa card spending by staff and council members for over \$47,000.

- Council is working on improving local traffic safety. It discussed several issues at its Feb. 25 meeting that included a speed limit reduction from 40 to 30 kilometres in Spruce Sands, pedestrian safety near the beach and the possible installation of seasonal bump-outs to calm traffic.

## MIVOAU operation in Interlake results in three arrests

By Haley Cvar

The Manitoba Integrated Violent Offender Apprehension Unit (MIVO-AU) conducted an operation in the Interlake on Feb. 26, resulting in the arrests of three individuals on outstanding warrants.

MIVOAU — an integrated team made up of officers from the Manitoba RCMP and the Winnipeg Police Service — travelled to the region as part of ongoing efforts to locate and arrest prolific and violent offenders.

With assistance from RCMP detachments in Ashern and Lundar, officers arrested Joshua Maytwayashing, 39, of Lake St. Martin First Nation, in Ashern. He was wanted on a warrant for assault and failing to comply with conditions of a release order. Police said he was later released on a release order and is scheduled to appear in court at a later date.

Officers also arrested Matthew Bedard, 40, of Eriksdale, at his residence on the strength of two warrants. One

warrant, issued by Selkirk RCMP, includes charges of sexual assault, sexual interference, sexual exploitation and administering a noxious substance. A second warrant from Sicamous, B.C., alleges sexual assault and sexual interference. Bedard has been remanded in custody and will be escorted back to British Columbia.

In a separate incident, Lundar RCMP conducted a traffic stop on Highway 417 in Lake Manitoba First Nation and arrested 26-year-old Ivo-

ry Maytwayashing, whom MIVOAU had been seeking earlier that day. She was wanted on a warrant for theft of a motor vehicle and failing to comply with conditions of a release order. She has also been remanded in custody.

Police say MIVOAU continues to work with community leadership throughout Manitoba to target violent and repeat offenders, enhance police presence and improve public safety through focused enforcement initiatives.

## Moosehorn to be left with no in-person financial services when Access closes branch

By Patricia Barrett

Moosehorn in the Rural Municipality of Grahamdale will be left with no in-person financial service institution when Access Credit Union closes its doors this summer.

Access CU announced on Feb. 19 that it will close its Moosehorn branch at 11 Railway Ave., as well as other rural branches across Manitoba.

Moosehorn will be “consolidated” with the branch in Ashern, which is about 14 kilometres (9 miles) south of Moosehorn.

“The consolidations are driven by several factors, including lower in-branch traffic, increased adoption of online and mobile banking, limited hours of operation in some locations due to consistent low traffic volumes, and the proximity of other Access Credit Union branches or communities where members frequently travel,” states an Access CU news release.

The trend in the closure of rural bank and credit union branches is underscored by cost-cutting measures and pressure on customers to adopt virtual banking services. In small rural centres with poor Internet connectivity, online banking may be problematic. Businesses that rely on making

deposits, and people who prefer in-branch service, will have to travel. Those without cars will be especially inconvenienced. Having in-person services can enhance fraud prevention measures.

Statistics for bank branches — which include big banks such as CIBC, Royal and BMO — show Manitoba having 185 branches in 2020 and 169 branches in 2024, according to the Canadian Bankers Association. Credit unions were stepping into the rural breach left behind by bank branch closures, but towns such as Winnipeg Beach in the Interlake saw its credit union branch close.

The Moosehorn Access branch is currently open Monday to Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The branch started out as the Moosehorn Credit Union in 1963 as a grassroots initiative involving seven founding members. Today, the branch offers savings and chequing accounts, loans, safety deposit boxes and other financial services, as well as support of the local community through charitable means and other involvement.

Access is the largest credit union in Manitoba with \$14.1 billion in assets.

Access’s president and CEO Myrna



RM OF GRAHAMDALE

The Moosehorn Access Credit Union branch is closing on June 19.

Wiebe said in the news release that the credit union’s members “are central to the decisions we make.”

“We want to ensure they have access to the services they need, and that the communities continue to be supported, even if the physical branch is not there,” said Wiebe. “Any Access branch across Manitoba can serve our members and we carefully considered distances between rural communities where members are travelling for other errands.”

Moosehorn’s closure will leave

about nine Access CU branches in the Interlake.

Access CU said in its statement that “all current branch staff” will retain their positions or move into corporate support roles.

The *Express* contacted the RM of Grahamdale for comment, as well as Access CU’s chief corporate affairs officer for comment about job losses, customers and whether an ATM will be made available in Moosehorn.

The Moosehorn branch closure is scheduled for June 19

## RCMP urge vigilance as Fraud Prevention Month begins

By Haley Cvar

The number of reported scams and frauds in Manitoba continues to climb, siphoning tens of millions of dollars from the bank accounts and wallets of hundreds — if not thousands — of residents each year.

With Fraud Prevention Month now underway, the Manitoba RCMP is reminding the public that fraudsters use a wide range of tactics to separate people from their money.

“Fraud is increasingly a problem in Manitoba, across Canada and around the world,” said Staff Sgt. Kevin Cavanagh of the Manitoba RCMP Major Crime Services Cyber and Financial Unit. “We encourage Manitobans of all ages to remain vigilant and do your research before making payments or sharing banking and other personal information, particularly

when individuals you don’t know are reaching out in person or online for any reason.”

According to the latest annual report from the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, Manitobans reported losing approximately \$31 million to scams in 2024 alone. Officials caution that the true figure is likely far higher, as only an estimated five to 10 per cent of victims report fraud to law enforcement.

Frauds range from relatively simple schemes — such as phishing texts requesting payment information for a package never ordered — to increasingly sophisticated operations. Some scams now involve artificial intelligence to create convincing “deep fakes” that lend credibility to bogus investment opportunities.

The most commonly reported frauds in Manitoba include identity theft,

false or misleading service-related promotions and scams posing as investment opportunities.

While seniors are often perceived as the most vulnerable, police say scammers target all age groups. National data shows the average dollar amount lost by victims in their 40s is nearly as high as that reported by victims in their 80s.

Police are offering several reminders to help residents protect themselves:

If it sounds too good to be true, it likely is. Offers of large inheritances or lottery winnings in exchange for “processing fees” are not legitimate. Nor are buyers who offer more than the asking price for items listed for sale online.

Be cautious of unsolicited contact. Phone calls, texts or emails from unknown individuals or organizations

pressuring you to purchase goods or services you never expressed interest in should raise red flags.

Safeguard personal information. Avoid sharing personal details with strangers, particularly over the phone or online. Be mindful of what is posted on social media.

Verify before you act. A caller claiming to be a grandchild in need of bail money or a company threatening to cut off service over an unfamiliar overdue bill may not be legitimate. Ask detailed questions and, if necessary, hang up and contact the individual or organization directly using a known phone number.

Anyone who believes they have been defrauded is encouraged to report the incident to their local RCMP detachment or police service. Police say reporting fraud can help investigators identify patterns, link suspects and prevent others from becoming victims.

Victims are also asked to file a report with the National Cybercrime and Fraud Reporting System, which serves as a central repository for fraud and cybercrime reports across Canada. Additional information is available through the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre.

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# Local grower credits seminar for 1,000-pound pumpkin success

By Lana Meier

A friendly neighbourhood bet in Balmoral has grown into a full-fledged giant pumpkin rivalry — and one local grower is crediting a winter seminar for helping tip the scales in his favour.

Travis Williams captured both first and second place in this past season's Balmoral pumpkin-growing competition, highlighted by a massive 1,022-pound entry. The success followed his attendance at the Manitoba Giant Growers Association's Giant Pumpkin Growers Seminar last year.

"A few years ago, my good neighbour Don Slater and I had a bet to see who could grow the biggest pumpkin," Williams said. "In 2024, five families from Balmoral decided to have a pumpkin-growing contest. As the size of the pumpkins got bigger, so did the number of entries."

This past season, nine families entered what Williams describes as a "friendly" competition.

As interest intensified, so did the

search for a competitive edge.

"The Giant Pumpkin Growers Seminar became of high interest for those looking for a competitive edge," he said.

The seminar, which returns March 28 at the Blair Sharpe Active Living Centre in Miami, features experienced growers sharing techniques on producing pumpkins weighing 1,000 pounds or more.

Williams said the event proved invaluable.

"The seminar is of tremendous value. Arthur Cameron is very welcoming. Milan Lukes is an excellent presenter," he said. "In addition to the table stakes of lots of sunshine, water and space, Milan gave helpful hints on pumpkin placement, plant maintenance and fertility."

Despite the knowledge gained, the growing season came with challenges.

"Pumpkins love sunlight and water. The smoke from the forest fires reduced the amount of sunlight. May,



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

The Manitoba Giant Growers Association will host its annual Giant Pumpkin Growers Seminar March 28 at the Blair Sharpe Active Living Centre in Miami, offering tips, techniques and free seeds for aspiring growers.

June and July had very little rain," Williams said. "We can water our pumpkins, but irrigation is not a direct substitute for rainwater."

Even so, he knew he had something special in his patch.

"I could see that my pumpkins

were much bigger this year, but I was surprised with how much they weighed," he said. "My dad thought we might have underestimated their size when he could feel the weight of

Continued on page 27



**Icelandic River Community Foundation**

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# ISEE hosting virtual sessions to help recognize and prevent child sexual exploitation

By E. Antonio

Interlake Sexual Exploitation Educators (ISEE) are encouraging parents and caregivers to become informed about the realities of child sexual exploitation — particularly in the online world.

The Selkirk-based committee is offering a free virtual presentation for adults exploring the various ways children and teens can be exploited online. The first session will take place Wednesday, March 11, from 1 to 3 p.m., with a repeat presentation March 12 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

ISEE is a collaborative committee made up of local organizations, schools, agencies, community groups and concerned residents. The group provides free sexual exploitation prevention resources to adults and youth as part of the Province of Manitoba's Sexual Exploitation Strategy, Tricia's Trust.

ISEE co-chairs Jim Dao and Sherisse Picklyk Dear say the committee is committed to educating, supporting and informing community members about childhood sexual exploitation — both in person and online.

"We want to help kids — and their parents or caregivers — understand this is happening now," Picklyk Dear said. "Not only raising awareness of child and youth sexual exploitation that is happening globally but also right here in the Interlake."

March marks Manitoba's Stop Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Month, and Dao and Picklyk Dear are encouraging all adults who interact with children to attend one of the two sessions — regardless of the child's age.

"Even if your child is young, you need to be able to aptly prepare for this," Picklyk Dear said. "Anyone who interacts with kids who use a device should be aware — including school staff, coaches, CFS workers, doctors and relatives."

With experience working in the public sector, both co-chairs say they have seen firsthand the risks youth face online and the importance of digital safety. Picklyk Dear described as "horrifying" the things predators can do to youth online.

"They are master manipulators. They are tech savvy — they know exactly what they are doing,"

she said.

The presentation will outline what online child sexual exploitation can look like, how to speak with children appropriately about the topic, and what resources and supports are available. Short videos will help participants better understand real-world scenarios, followed by a 30-minute question-and-answer session.

Dao noted exploitation can begin slowly through everyday online chats on a variety of platforms, including Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok and online video games such as Roblox.

"At the end of the day, predators will turn the conversations to a sexual nature, and the goal will be to acquire pictures or videos," he said. "Most caregivers are not tech savvy and don't know what's happening online or how to keep kids safe. Kids are left to deal with the online world themselves, and they don't know the dangers and risks. Predators will target these kids."

He described the online world as a predator's "new playground."

"When they are young, we teach kids about safety. We put on their seatbelt, put on their life jacket or helmet — now we need to make sure kids are taught safety in their new online playground."

While acknowledging the subject matter can be difficult, Picklyk Dear and Dao emphasized their goal is not to alarm families but to equip them with knowledge and tools.

They say "awareness is key" when it comes to addressing child exploitation and stress the importance of open conversations between caregivers and children.

"We need to talk about it," Dao added. "We never want to brush it under the carpet."

In addition to the March sessions, ISEE offers free school presentations to students in grades 7 to 12 throughout the year. These sessions cover topics such as exploitation, grooming, luring, cyberbullying and consent, using youth-friendly language and interactive discussions.

Advance registration is required for the March 11 and 12 parent and caregiver presentations. Adults

An 18+ presentation  
Follow us on Instagram @iseeinterlake for any and all updates!

## ISEE Parent & Caregiver Online Presentation

In acknowledgement of the Provincial Stop Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness month, the Interlake Sexual Exploitation Educators (ISEE) committee is hosting FREE virtual presentations to parents & caregivers! The 2h presentation will explore the various ways that children & teens can be exploited in the online world. Parents learn the dangers of popular social media and how it can put kids at risk for sexual exploitation and affect their mental health. By providing information and strategies, we hope to empower caregivers to help keep kids safe. Awareness is key!

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### EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Interlake Sexual Exploitation Educators (ISEE) offer free resources and learning opportunities about child sexual exploitation.

can register through the Microsoft Form linked via the QR code on the event poster. Each participant will be entered into a live draw for a \$50 gift card.

Due to the sensitive nature of the content, children should not attend the virtual presentation, either alone or alongside an adult.

For more information, to access resources or to schedule a presentation, visit [www.interlakesee.ca](http://www.interlakesee.ca) or follow ISEE on Instagram (@iseeinterlake) and Facebook.

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Pick up days: Friday, March 13 9 AM to 5 PM

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Lots start closing on March 25, 2026 at 10:00AM. Pick up days: Friday, March 27th & Saturday March 28th from 9 AM to 5 PM-

### MARCH ONSITE Week 2 Consignment Sale

Viewing: March 16-19 from 9 AM to 5PM. Bidding starts: March 19, 2026 at 9:00AM. Lots start closing on March 26, 2026 at 10:00AM. Pick up days: Friday, March 27th & Saturday March 28th from 9 AM to 5 PM



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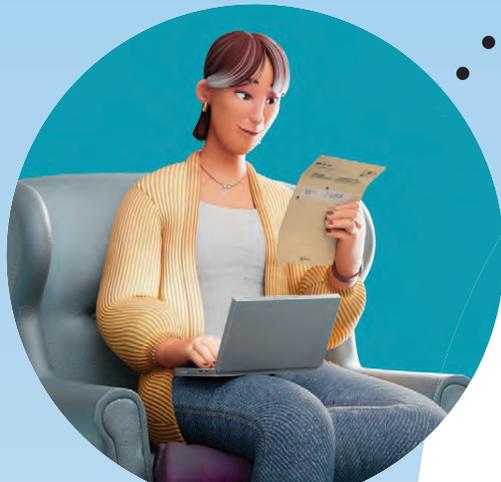


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Find out more at [census.gc.ca/north](https://census.gc.ca/north)



Pour en savoir plus, visitez le [recensement.gc.ca/nord](https://recensement.gc.ca/nord)

# Riverton Ice Fishing Derby draws record crowd

By Haley Cvar

The second annual Riverton Ice Fishing Derby saw record participation on Manitoba's Family Day, with organizers crediting strong community support and more than 60 volunteers for its success.

Held Feb. 16, the 2026 derby welcomed 291 adult fishers and 122 youth participants (17 and under), marking a 31 per cent increase over last year's event.

The day began with a hot deluxe breakfast at the Riverton Hall, hosted by the Riverton and District Friendship Centre. Louis Riel Day celebrations featured live entertainment by fiddler Morgan Grace, jigging contests and raffle ticket sales in support of the derby.

On the ice, Djorfung Ladies Aid served homemade chili and hot dogs, while Danny's Whole Hog offered pork-on-a-bun. Children enjoyed sleigh rides and families took advantage of favourable weather conditions. Before prize presentations, Riverton Local Manitoba Métis Federation served free coffee and cake. Corrine Einarsson of Neisti Photography captured the day's events.

Community partners included the Riverton and District Friendship Centre, Riverton and Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission, Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton, Djorfung Ladies Aid, Riverton Local Manitoba Métis Federation, Riverton Elks Lodge No. 530, Riverton Collegiate, Riverton



Transportation and Heritage Centre, and Riverton Minor Hockey.

Organizers said the derby is once again expected to generate significant funds for local groups. In 2025, the board distributed \$16,000 in proceeds and anticipates exceeding \$27,000 from this year's event. Funds will be allocated to Riverton Minor Hockey (40 per cent), Riverton Transportation and Heritage Centre (20 per cent), Riverton and District Friendship Centre (20 per cent), and Djorfung Ladies Aid (20 per cent). Final amounts will be presented prior to March.

Top prize winners included Courtney Mazurkiewich, who earned \$4,000 for the longest fish at 64.5 centimetres, and youth winner Grayson Thorarinson, who received \$500 for a 41-centimetre catch.

The \$600 early bird draw was won by Ryan Palsson Jr. Grand prizes went to Wilfred Fernandez, winner of Westshore Marine's electric bike, and Ger-



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY CORRINE EINARSSON

The Riverton Ice Fishing Derby volunteer committee, left to right, back row: Corey Palsson, Wayne Furgala, Ross Cooper and Tyler Schellenberg; front row: Ruth Anne Furgala, Desarae Bilinski, Darlene Yaremus and Kyra Toderan.

ald Thorarinson, who claimed Rick Gergatz's SnoBear package. Gerri Sigurdson won the \$3,000 50/50 draw.

Additional \$100 prize winners were Celina Unrau, Riley Moldwon, Warren Toderan, Brian Eyolfson, Tyler Bottrell, Kennedy Toderan, Nelson Thomas and Colin Obsniuk.

Corporate sponsors ranged from platinum supporters Riverton Elks Lodge No. 530 and Westshore Marine and Leisure to numerous gold, silver and bronze contributors, alongside 62 prize donors and several in-kind supporters.

Organizers have already set the date for next year's derby for Feb. 15, 2027.



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## SATURDAY, MARCH 7 Events & Times!

8:30am – 1:00pm	<b>A Viking's Challenge 7th Edition</b> <i>A Save Your Skin Foundation Fundraiser Run on the Lake</i>
9:00am – 11:00am	<b>Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast</b> <i>At Gimli Rec Centre \$2 with Festival Pass (\$7 without Pass)</i>
10:00am – 3:00pm	<b>Fire on Ice Car Racing</b> <i>Practice from 10am - 11am Racing 12pm - 3pm on the Lake</i>
10:00am – 3:30pm	<b>Create Your Own Cool-io-Canvas Painting</b> <i>At Hidden Treasures Studio - Festival Pass + \$2 to Participate</i>
10:00am – 4:00pm	<b>Gimli Metis &amp; EIWD - Artisan + Vendor Market</b> <i>At Lakeview Resort Ballrooms A-C – Festival Pass Required</i>
11:00am – 3:00pm	<b>Face Painting &amp; Festival Mural Creation</b> <i>At Gimli Art Club by the Harbour – Festival Pass Required</i>
11:00am – 3:00pm	<b>Bannock &amp; Tea + Maple Syrup Taffy On Stick</b> <i>Near Visitor Centre by the Harbour – Festival Pass Required</i>
11:00am – 3:00pm	<b>Hands of Lugh Viking Age Reenactors</b> <i>At Gimli Harbour</i>

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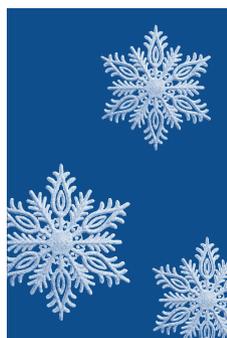




<b>11:00am – 3:00pm</b>	<b>Frozen Fish Toss</b> <i>At Gimli Harbour</i>
<b>11:00am - 3:00pm</b>	<b>Cooley's Outdoor Fun-Time Games</b> <i>At Gimli Harbour</i>
<b>11:30am – 2:30pm</b>	<b>GIFF Short Screening + Festival Reflection Video</b> <i>At Lady of the Lake Theatre – Festival Pass Required</i>
<b>12:00pm – 1:30pm</b>	<b>Harness Dog Winter Sport Demo</b> <i>At Gimli Inner Harbour</i>
<b>12:00pm – 3:00pm</b>	<b>Horse Drawn Wagon Rides</b> <i>Starts at 1<sup>st</sup> Ave &amp; Centre St \$5 Ride Ticket Required</i>
<b>12:00pm - 7:00pm</b>	<b>Jus Chillin ATV &amp; UTV Show 'N Shine + Demo!</b> <i>At Gimli Boardwalk &amp; On The Lake</i>
<b>7:00pm – doors open</b>	<b>LEDDWYN Band Live</b> <i>At Lakeview Resort Admission \$10 Band starts at 7:30pm</i>
<b>7:00pm</b>	<b>FIREWORKS!</b> <i>At Gimli Harbour</i>

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<b>10:00am – 3:00pm</b>	<b>Fire on Ice Car Racing</b> <i>Practice from 10am - 11am Racing 12pm - 3pm on the Lake</i>
<b>11:00am – 2:00pm</b>	<b>Face Painting &amp; Festival Mural Creation</b> <i>At Gimli Art Club by the Harbour – Festival Pass Required</i>
<b>11:00am – 2:30pm</b>	<b>Bannock &amp; Tea + Maple Syrup Taffy On Stick</b> <i>Near Visitor Centre by the Harbour – Festival Pass Required</i>
<b>11:00am – 3:00pm</b>	<b>Hands of Lugh Viking Age Reenactors</b> <i>At Gimli Harbour</i>
<b>11:30am – 2:30pm</b>	<b>GIFF Short Screening + Festival Reflection Video</b> <i>At Lady of the Lake Theatre – Festival Pass Required</i>
<b>12:00pm - 3:30pm</b>	<b>Create Your Own Cool-io-Canvas Painting</b> <i>At Hidden Treasures Studio Festival Pass + \$2 to Participate</i>
<b>1:00pm – 2:30pm</b>	<b>Polar Games Teams Competition</b> <i>Info &amp; Registration at Visitor Centre Festival Headquarters</i>
<b>1:00pm – 3:00pm</b>	<b>Brave the Journey to Arendelle + Fun-Time Activities!</b> <i>At Lakeview Resort Ballrooms</i>
<b>2:45pm – 3:30pm</b>	<b>Frozen T-Shirt Competition</b> <i>Info &amp; Registration at Visitor Centre Festival Headquarters</i>
<b>Variable Times</b>	<b>Jus Chillin ATV &amp; UTV Obstacle Course Demo</b> <i>On the Lake</i>
<b>Variable Times</b>	<b>Cooley's Outdoor Fun-Time Games</b> <i>At Gimli Harbour after 11am</i>
<b>Variable Times</b>	<b>Frozen Fish Toss</b> <i>At Gimli Harbour after 11am</i>



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# 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 Home-wood 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



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

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.

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 their machines up, so they designed their own unit and strengthened the

Continued on page 27



The fence line mower created by R-Tech Industries was recognized in the farm safety category in the Innovation Showcase at Ag Days.

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# International WOMEN'S DAY



## Volunteer spirit powers Winnipeg Beach Legion

By Lana Meier

International Women's Day is celebrated March 8, and in Winnipeg Beach, Velma Darroux is among the local women being honoured for a lifetime of volunteering — and for the work she continues to do to keep the Royal Canadian Legion's doors open.

For decades, Darroux has been the kind of volunteer communities quietly rely on — the one who shows up when help is needed, recruits others to do the same, and keeps coming back.

Today, she serves as first vice-president of the Royal Canadian Legion in Winnipeg Beach and is one of the key people working behind the scenes to sustain the hall through fundraising, food sales and community events.

"I didn't join right away. I volunteered, but I didn't join till about 10 years ago," Darroux said, explaining she waited until her children were older and her schedule eased after years of full-time work.

Darroux worked with the Evergreen School Division in Gimli, spending time in the superintendent's department. When she did join the Legion, she was soon voted in as first vice-president — a role she has largely held ever since. She is also the branch's newsletter chair and public relations chair.

The branch has about 140 members, Darroux said, with an executive committee of roughly 15 or 16. While there are younger members — including many members' children — she estimates about 60 per cent of the membership is older.

A family connection helped shape her understanding of service. Darroux's grandfather, David Wilcox, served in the infantry and came home, though she said he lived with the impacts many veterans carried. Wilcox died when she was four.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Velma Darroux, first vice-president of the Winnipeg Beach Legion, is pictured with her husband, Lincoln. Darroux is among the local women being honoured as part of International Women's Day celebrations on March 8.

Her mother, Donna Massier, belonged to a Legion ladies auxiliary for years, later transferring her membership to Winnipeg Beach after moving to the area. Darroux said watching her mom's busy volunteer life made her hesitate at first.

"In my mind, I thought membership... I was like, 'I don't have time for all this, Mom. Maybe when I retire,'" she said.

Now retired, she laughs about how much time the Legion takes — and how it still feels worth it.

"It gives you a sense of pride. It's an honour to work alongside so many of these wonderful peo-

ple," Darroux said. "If I was sitting at home in front of the TV set, I wouldn't meet half the people I meet downtown at the Legion."

That community connection, she said, is part of what keeps her involved — from greeting people at the door to running major fundraisers like the Legion's spring fashion show.

The event has grown quickly, she said. When she was first asked to run it about three years ago, she didn't know where to start. The first year, she struggled to find models, so her husband and two children stepped in alongside two other women to fill out the show.

"Everybody's seen how much fun we had," she said. "I had people phoning me from Arborg, Riverton — 'Can I be in your fashion show?'"

Now she has about 22 models, including her husband, Lincoln, who has become a crowd favourite. She also has a youngest model who first walked the runway at 18 months old and is now about 3 1/2.

The show features clothing and accessories from Red Apple in Gimli, where Darroux's daughter, Tamara, is manager. Darroux said the affordable price points surprise people — and the community turnout has been strong.

Tickets are \$25 and include the show and a dinner, plus door prizes and a 50-50 draw. "We sell out every time," she said, noting they cap the event at 150 to maintain space for the runway.

Fundraising has become more critical in recent years, as basic operating costs rise. Darroux said the branch's insurance nearly doubled after COVID-19.

"It's over \$7,000, almost \$8,000," she said. Before the pandemic, she said insurance was just under

Continued on page 24



# International WOMEN'S DAY



## Napier Emergency Consulting providing expertise and boots on the ground

By Patricia Barrett

As part of 115th annual International Women's Day on March 8, the Express is celebrating women whose work helps people in the Interlake and who've made a significant impact in their industry.

Shelley Napier is the managing director of Napier Emergency Consulting, teaching people how to prepare for and survive an emergency.

Prior to setting up her consultancy, Napier worked with the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization before retiring in 2017.

Napier identifies risks, creates emergency plans and provides training for specific emergency situations that can range from floods, severe winter storms, tornados, wildfires, community evacuations and shootings.

Napier has overcome a number of challenges working in a male-dominated industry and has made a name for herself. She is a much sought after expert in her field.

"As a woman in this business, I've learned that you're going to have your challenges. You have to be willing to be strong and have your voice heard, and find a way to make that happen by being respectful, by building a good team and by working together," said Napier, who has decades of emergency management experience and is a founding member of the annual Manitoba Disaster Management Conference.

"You've got to deal with people where they are. It's not my job to change anyone's mind. It's my job to try to educate people and allow them to see how much stronger their community or organization can be if they implement the emergency plans and processes we teach them."

Napier delivers training to emergency managers across Canada, Indigenous communities, municipalities and other organizations. She works on getting people to the stage at which they can take charge of whatever emergency they happen to find themselves in and execute a carefully considered plan tailored to their unique physical location.

Those plans are very detailed and can include knowing exactly how many cars can fit on a ferry at one time when an island community has to be evacuated, how many boats a lakeside community has that can



**PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHELLEY NAPIER**  
Shelley Napier has earned several awards for her emergency management work, including a King Charles III Coronation medal. She works with communities, businesses, organizations, academic institutions and First Nations across Manitoba, Canada, as well as overseas.

be used for escape, identifying how much gasoline a community has at one time, identifying muster points or staging areas for evacuation where a head count can be done, identifying escape routes for several thousand people attending festivals such as the Icelandic Festival in Gimli or the Corn and Apple Festival in Morden.

Napier's consultancy team is made up of professionals with specialized areas of expertise. They're academics who bring emergency management research and best practices to the table, and practitioners who've had their boots on the ground during emergencies - a team Napier calls "pracademics." The team includes "really strong women."

"We do phenomenal work. When I look at what we do and what we produce, everything is individually tailored and everything meets the clients' needs," said Napier. "We work on emergency topics that no one has really has looked at; there's not been a lot of work done on those with physical disabilities. And we work with numerous Indigenous communities across Canada, helping them build emergency programs. They're on the front line, and oftentimes they're unable to get help quickly if they're located in remote areas."

Climate change can be a challenging topic for emergency managers; the trend towards more severe weather events and disasters may not neces-



Napier found herself in lockdown in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, last month when cartel members with guns staged violent demonstrations in the streets of the popular tourist destination and set fire to Pemex stations.



Napier said 69 Oxxo convenience stores were destroyed in last month's cartel attack on Puerto Vallarta. From an emergency management standpoint, Napier said alerts in multiple languages should have been issued so that visitors could understand what was happening.

sarily be viewed by some in the context of global warming.

"We can call it weather that is very different from what it used to be, or we can call it climate change - it doesn't matter. But I think we have to acknowledge that there are more frequent weather emergencies happening," said Napier. "We're having earlier and earlier fires burning. Last year [one of Manitoba's worst wildfire seasons] was not a one-off. I think we're going to see that again and again."

Emergencies in Manitoba may, in the public's mind, be primarily associated with weather. But Napier said it's not beyond the realm of possibility to imagine mass shootings here along the lines of that in Tumbler Ridge, B.C., or in Nova Scotia where a gun-

man disguised himself as an RCMP officer and killed multiple victims.

"I think a lot of the events happening around our country are a wake-up call," she said.

Ironically, Napier found herself in lockdown last month when she was in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, at the time members of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel staged violent demonstrations in the wake of the government's capture of their leader, Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes (El Mencho). Mayhem ensued in the streets of the popular tourist destination, with cars and buses commandeered and set on fire, as well as trucks carrying petrol. Oxxo convenience stores and Pemex gas stations were destroyed.

Looking at the riot and its aftermath

Continued on page 24



# International WOMEN'S DAY



## > EXPERTISE, FROM PG. 23

from the perspective of an emergency manager, Napier said communication from the top could have been much better. She struggled to understand instructions in Spanish to not leave her unit and had to use Google Translate.

"I think a proactive approach would have had [emergency alerts in] multiple languages so visitors could understand what was going on. That can reduce fear and start to calm people," said Napier. "This was new for Puerto Vallarta. And there was a lot of AI-generated information that was not accurate."

Europe is a good example where public messages are relayed in multiple languages, she said.

She has worked with the Canadian International Development Agency overseas managing emergencies, with NATO, and in countries such as the Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Ukraine and in Asia.

"One of the things I recognized early on in my international work was how grateful I am to be Canadian because we do emergency management really well at home," she said. "We don't have a top-down system in

Canada: we have a bottom-up system that's driven from a municipal level where a timely awareness of what's happening can help avoid damages."

In addition to training municipal and community leaders how to handle various events, Napier said it's important to also "build public education" whereby people become more aware of how they can prepare and help themselves should an emergency arise. That messaging should be delivered frequently to the point where it really sinks in.

"What can you do to prepare yourself? You can prepare a go bag of essential items. You can identify neighbours who might need help. You can implement a buddy system in your neighbourhood. You can't expect a council in a small municipality with few resources and staff to be able to do everything," said Napier. "We need to start implementing better public education. That could be handouts reminding people when we're in fire season. People should know access and exit points. Make this so common that it starts to sink in."

She heard stories from last year's wildfires that people didn't know

they had to evacuate because they were in an area with no cell towers, she said. But they should have been given enough public messaging beforehand to make them aware of risks during fire season and to know how to get out.

"Maybe you want to have a satellite phone. You want to have your ID, medication, important documents and change of clothing in a go bag," she said. "If this message is delivered every fire season, it becomes muscle memory."

Part of emergency planning in communities can include identifying volunteers to be part of a response team, holding town halls where emergency planning is publicly discussed or arranging presentations from emergency management experts.

Napier said she tries to make emergency preparedness training fun for communities, and some of the tools she uses are games such as "Hazard Bingo" with emergency supplies as prizes.

"We try to make it so that the public is excited to try to build a safe community," she said. "That happens through knowledge-sharing and from backing from a municipal council."

Napier said the training uptake

from councils has been "amazing." She cited The RM of Grahamdale and Victoria Beach - which is a peninsula surrounded by boreal forest - as being "so tuned in" to emergency planning and what sorts of programs they can implement to reduce the risk of fire damage.

And she has emergency exercises planned this month with the RM of Armstrong.

In addition to in-person emergency management training, Napier offers monthly online workshops through her website. Called LearnEM Academy, the workshops are hosted by emergency management practitioners from across Canada.

Napier said she absolutely loves her job and the rewards it brings.

"This has never been work for me. I love what I do. I love the people I work with. I learn something new from each client. And I've made so many friends across the country," said Napier. "I feel very honoured to be given a chance to help somebody build an emergency management program for themselves. It's never been monetary for me; we do some pro bono work in certain situations. If it's going to save a life, I will help. I will help as long as I possibly can."

## > VOLUNTEER SPIRIT, FROM PG. 22

about \$4,000.

Overall, she estimates it costs roughly \$4,000 a month to keep the doors open, including insurance, utilities and other expenses. Some roles, such as bartenders and cleaners, receive an annual honorarium, she said, while much of the maintenance work is volunteer-led.

The branch is also fundraising for a new roof, estimated at about \$100,000 depending on structural repairs required once the existing roof is removed. The building was constructed in 1957, though the Legion itself was granted its charter in 1928. Members hope to complete the work before the branch's 100th anniversary in 2028.

To help cover costs, the Legion sells food year-round, offering items such as perogies, cabbage rolls, piroshki, fruit pies and meat pies. Orders can be placed through the Legion at 204-389-2660, Darroux said.

"We have the ones stocked in the freezers at the hall," she said. "When people need something, they can give us a call."

During the pandemic, those food

sales became a lifeline.

"That's when we started doing the year-round food supplies," she said, describing pre-orders and scheduled pickup times to maintain distancing. She estimates baking still accounts for about two-thirds of the branch's revenue, even as rentals slowly return.

The work is labour-intensive — from dough-making and rolling to pinching and boiling — but Darroux said it's also become a point of pride, especially as more men join the kitchen crews.

"We're getting more men out now, which is really nice," she said. "Now we've got a bunch that actually come and pinch the perogies."

Events like teas and seasonal dinners also build community — including moments that stick with volunteers for years.

Darroux recalls a Christmas tea shortly after her son Ryan was born on Nov. 16. The tea was held only days later.

"I got out of the hospital that morning and I took him to the tea that afternoon," she said. "He was four days

old."

Older volunteers brought it up every year afterward, she said — a memory that now reminds her of the women who have passed and the ongoing need to welcome new volunteers.

Darroux said she hopes more young people will step forward, even in small ways.

"Whether they have a half hour a month to help, one time only or an hour a day, whatever they can give — do it," she said. "The people and the experiences you get... you can't buy that kind of stuff."

The branch, she added, tries to include young people/youth whenever they can. Cadets from Gimli often help serve at teas, pouring coffee and tea, and Darroux said community members frequently jump in during events if they see volunteers stretched.

The Legion's support extends beyond fundraising and remembrance, she said. At Christmas, Darroux said the branch distributes more than 175 dinners in the community — delivering meals to veterans and their families, seniors' residences and shut-ins identified by residents. Purchases

from others help offset costs.

The branch also helps lend mobility aids such as walkers and wheelchairs donated by families no longer needing them, she said.

"People feel like they're invisible in this world," Darroux said. "A little thank you sometimes is all people need."

Asked what she would hope people say about her impact, Darroux said her family helped her land on a simple answer: "Velma, she's a smiley face that's always there to lend a hand."

## UPCOMING WINNIPEG BEACH LEGION EVENTS:

- Fashion Show: April 26 (tickets through the Legion; also available at Red Apple in Gimli)
  - Mother's Day Tea and Bake Sale: May 9
  - Bud, Spud & Steak Night: May 23
- Tickets/info: Legion 204-389-2660 or Velma Darroux 204-642-2840
- Year-round food orders: 204-389-2660 (perogies, cabbage rolls, piroshki, meat pies, fruit pies)

# Dawn Green drives business and community

By Lana Meier

As communities prepare to mark International Women's Day on March 8, we are honouring women across the region whose leadership, resilience and service help shape the Interlake.

One of those women is Dawn Green. On the side of a Manitoba highway, with hazard lights flashing and prairie wind sweeping across the road, Green steps out of her tow truck ready to assess the situation.

When the call comes in, she doesn't hesitate.

Green is co-founder of Rockwood Wrecking and Recovery Inc., a locally owned towing and roadside assistance company she operates alongside her husband, Steve Green. The couple launched the business after recognizing a need for reliable towing services in the region.

"Steve had always been an owner-operator running his own business but was working for a large towing company in Winnipeg," Green said. "We found out that there was a need for towing services within the area. This gave us the opportunity to open up Rockwood Wrecking and Recovery."

She credits her husband for helping her grow into the hands-on role she now fills daily.

"Steve is such a great support system and has taught me everything I know to do today," she said.

Today, the company provides lockouts, battery boosts, flatbed towing, recovery services and emergency roadside response throughout the Stonewall and Interlake region — and no two days are alike.

"A typical day — I'm not really sure this exists," Green said with a laugh. "For us, wake up, have breakfast and coffee, tend to the kids, get them ready for school and daycare — and after drop-offs, typical is over."

If the morning is slower, she catches up on invoicing and accounting. But once the calls start coming in, the day can head in any direction.

"From lockouts, boosts, flatbed towing — we never really know where the day is going to lead."

One of her most challenging recoveries involved a vehicle teetering dangerously on a culvert.

"Our job is to recover vehicles without causing any additional damage," she said. "I had to utilize my knowledge from previous years — using both of my winch lines to stabilize the vehicle as well as be able to winch the vehicle over without catching the edges of the culvert, potentially causing any more damage. The recovery

was a success and the vehicle was towed for further inspection."

Preparation, she said, is both physical and mental.

"Physically preparing for roadside work involves making sure you have the right tools to do the job — all our trucks come equipped with everything we need," she said. "Most of the mental preparation comes once you arrive on scene. You have to analyze and assess the situation, be aware of your surroundings and any potential safety hazards. Safety is No. 1 — not only for us as roadside providers but as well as the customer."

Green and her husband are also raising two young children while operating a 24-hour business — a balancing act that requires flexibility and a strong support system.

"Raising two kids is a challenge on its own — let alone running your own business and adding in the factor that it's 24 hours. It definitely has its challenges," she said. "Our family grew as our business grew and continues to grow. You find little ways here and there to ensure that you make time for not only the kids but family time."

They often travel to school and community events in tow trucks, depending on the day's calls.

"Most of the time, you will actually see us going to or from events or school in tow trucks," she said. "It is either we are on our way back from a call or on the way to the next one. We tend to always take two trucks, in the event one of us gets called out — or, in some cases, we both get called out."

For their children, having a mom who drives a tow truck is simply normal.

"For my kids, it's just an everyday thing," Green said. "They have both grown up in and out of tow trucks — so for them it's normal."

Beyond roadside assistance, Green is deeply committed to community involvement in the Stonewall and Rockwood area.

"Community involvement is important to me because it creates meaningful connections," she said. "When people come together to support one another, communities become more resilient, inclusive and empowered. It also encourages others to do the same — allowing for more community growth."

The Greens have hosted outdoor movie nights in partnership with the South Interlake Rockwood Agriculture Society at the Red Barn grounds, transforming the space into a drive-in-style experience.

"We had hosted a few movie nights



EXPRESS PHOTO BY LANA MEIER

Dawn Green, co-founder of Rockwood Wrecking and Recovery Inc., stands in front of one of the company's tow trucks in the Stonewall area. Green balances operating a 24-hour towing business with raising two young children while remaining deeply involved in community initiatives across the Interlake. As communities mark International Women's Day on March 8, Green is being recognized for her leadership, resilience and commitment to service in a traditionally male-dominated industry.

in the past, and last year we wanted to do something a little different," she said. "We figured how cool would it be to do a drive-in-style movie. It was a great collaboration."

This year's drive-in movie is already booked for Aug. 29.

She also helps organize donations for the Christmas Cheer Board.

"For me, organizing the Christmas Cheer Board donations is just another way for us to give back to the community — helping those in need at a time that is supposed to be magical for everyone," she said.

Her dedication was recently recognized when she received the Stonewall & District Community Service Award.

"Receiving the award made us feel very grateful and deeply humbled. It was a proud moment for us," she said. "It caught us off guard — but it was a really nice surprise. We have always been focused on serving the community."

As International Women's Day approaches, Green said she has noticed positive change in traditionally male-dominated industries.

"I believe all trades are progressing to be more gender equal," she said. "If

you are willing to work hard, you can do anything."

Before entering towing, Green worked as an insurance broker for nearly 10 years. The shift into the towing industry was not something she had originally planned.

"I never would have thought that I would be in this trade, but life took a different path for me," she said. "When the opportunity came knocking, it was something I kept pushing for. There's space for women in every industry — including towing."

Her message to young women is simple: "If there is something that you want to do — go for it."

For Green, strength goes beyond physical capability.

"Strength isn't just physical," she said. "It's about pushing through challenges, learning from setbacks and continuing to grow — both personally and professionally. Strength is also about lifting up others while you climb."

From challenging highway recoveries to community movie nights, Green continues to build both her business and her community — one call at a time.

# Veteran hunters push back on proposed swan, dove seasons

By E. Antonio

Retired Manitoba wildlife biologists and longtime hunters are urging Ottawa to reconsider a proposal that would allow tundra swan and mourning dove hunting seasons in the province as early as 2028.

The proposal would allow up to 400 tundra swan permits to be issued annually in Manitoba, aligned with existing fall migratory bird hunting timelines. Permits would likely be distributed through a random draw using an electronic licensing system. The proposed daily bag limit is one tundra swan per permit, with hunters restricted to a single permit per season. According to information published by the Government of Canada, officials estimate approximately 148 individual hunters would ultimately harvest a tundra swan each year.

In Manitoba, however, opposition is coming not only from non-hunters, but from veteran wildlife biologists, conservation educators and lifelong hunters who argue the proposal is unnecessary — and potentially harmful.

Ted Muir, a former Manitoba Wildlife educator, founding lead at Oak Hammock Marsh and lifelong waterfowl hunter, said he was stunned when he first heard of the proposal.

“As a naturalist and waterfowl hunter, I was completely taken aback,” he said. “We are blessed in Manitoba to have a bounty of waterfowl hunting opportunities — especially in the Prairies. There is absolutely no need to introduce these new seasons.”

Muir’s greatest concern centres on trumpeter swans — a species that was once nearly wiped out across much of North America. Recovery efforts began in earnest in 1988 when Minnesota’s Nongame Wildlife Program launched a restoration initiative, incubating and raising birds at the Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area. Over the years, those efforts have helped nesting pairs gradually re-establish themselves in Manitoba, including in areas such as Hecla Island, Oak Hammock Marsh and Delta Marsh.

Tundra and trumpeter swans can appear strikingly similar, particularly at a distance or in shifting light. While experienced observers can distinguish them — trumpeters are generally larger, with longer bills and subtle differences in facial markings — critics argue that in real-world hunting conditions, mistakes are possible.

“Introduction of this new swan hunting season could reverse the positive gains that have been made to restore trumpeter swans to their historic range,” Muir said.



A mourning dove perches on a fence post in Manitoba. The species is among those being considered for a potential hunting season under a federal Notice of Consideration.

The United States already permits hunting of tundra swans and mourning doves in some jurisdictions with higher population densities. But Muir believes Manitoba does not need to mirror American policies.

“Just because they do it doesn’t mean we have to,” he said. “Trumpeter swans are a valuable resource in Manitoba, attracting residents and visitors who travel far and wide to view these magnificent birds on many of Manitoba’s wetlands.”

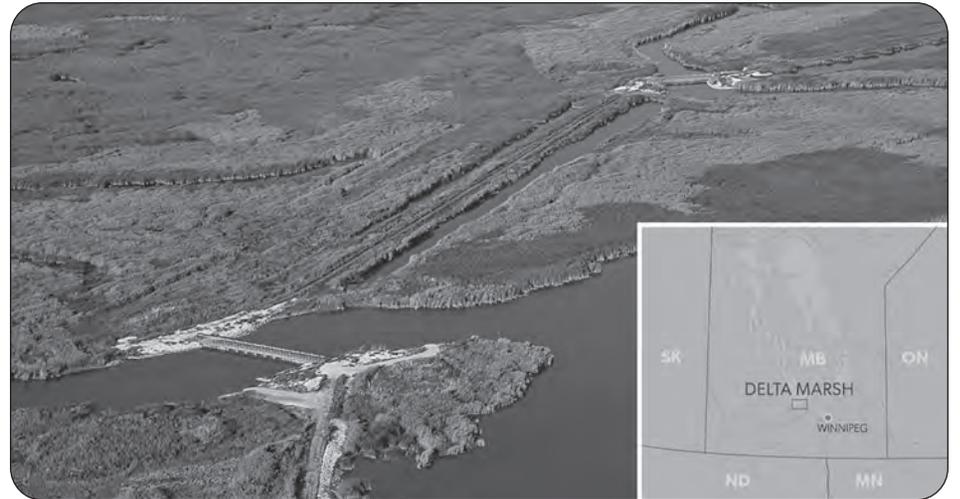
He emphasizes he is not opposed to hunting. As a hunter himself, he says ethical harvest and conservation are core values of the tradition. What concerns him most is the potential for misidentification — and the risk of damaging public trust in the hunting community.

“Just because you can do something doesn’t mean you should,” he added.

Hannah Boonstra, spokesperson for Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), said tundra swan and mourning dove hunting seasons have not yet been introduced as formal regulatory changes. The department is currently reviewing feedback after outlining the potential additions in its Notice of Consideration.

She explained that Canadian hunting regulations are reviewed and amended every two years, with input from provinces, territories and other stakeholders.

“When a new hunting season for a species that is not currently harvested in a jurisdiction is under consideration — as is the case for tundra swan and mourning dove — it is first posted as a Notice of Consideration for the Canadian public to review and comment on,” she said. “If the season is pursued, it is posted as a regulatory proposal two years later for public comment and may contain adjust-



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Delta Marsh provides vital habitat for swans, ducks and other migratory birds. Critics of a proposed tundra swan hunting season say protecting long-term species management must remain a priority.



A tundra swan (left) and a trumpeter swan are shown side by side. Retired Manitoba wildlife biologists say the two species can appear strikingly similar in field conditions, raising concerns about potential misidentification if a tundra swan hunting season is introduced.

ments that reflect comments or concerns received during the first public consultation.”

In addition to public feedback, ECCC considers population trends and statistical data when determining whether to proceed.

Dr. James Duncan of Balmoral, former director of Manitoba’s Wildlife and Fisheries Branch and a lifelong owl researcher — as well as a deer hunter — views the proposal through a broader conservation lens.

He notes that federal avian studies continue to show long-term declines in many bird species, particularly grassland and insect-eating birds.

These trends are shown in the 2024 Bird Canada Study with 36 per cent of Canadian species declining since 1970 with grassland, insectivorous and shorebird species hit the hardest.

While duck and goose populations remain relatively strong, he questions whether expanding game species should be a priority.

The Government of Canada website notes, “Not all waterfowl are adequately surveyed using breeding ground surveys because of issues related to distribution, density and timing of surveys relative to arrival of

birds on breeding grounds,” adding that tundra swans are more effectively monitored through winter surveys. The survey used to track the eastern tundra swan population is conducted mid-winter in parts of southern Ontario, as well as along the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways.

According to the Management Plan for the Eastern Population of Tundra Swans, the objective is to maintain a three-year population index of at least 80,000 birds. The current three-year average (2023 to 2025) is 92,755.

For mourning doves, population statistics were drawn from the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) between 2007 and 2015. During that period, the survey estimated Manitoba’s breeding population at approximately one million birds — about 15 per cent of the national total. The Government of Canada website also states, “Since 1970, there has been no detectable long-term trend in the abundance of Mourning Dove’s in Manitoba’s portion of [Bird Conservation Region (BCR)] 11, which is the core of the species range in the province. However, the BBS shows a significant short-term increase (1.8% per year,

## > HUNTING CHANGES, FROM PG. 26

2012 to 2022) in the number of breeding Mourning Doves in the Manitoba portion of BCR 11."

These population trends, meanwhile, still don't justify newly regulated hunting seasons to the opposed hunters.

"Most people consider mourning doves to be songbirds," Duncan said. "They're associated with peace. Swans, meanwhile, are delicate and beautiful birds. Is it really worth it for the limited number of people who would actually harvest them?"

Duncan also points to the success of Minnesota's trumpeter swan recovery efforts, calling them exceptional. Introducing a hunt for a nearly identical species, he suggests, feels counter-intuitive.

"Even experienced observers can find it challenging in certain conditions," he said. "Why take that risk?"

As a deer hunter, Duncan says he understands the role hunting can play in conservation and food security.

"I take great pride in responsibility for the land and animals," he said.

"I'm getting a fresh source of local, healthy food, helping manage populations and supporting the economy. But for these birds? I think we should remain watching them."

Warren resident Doug Langrell, an educator, orchardist and lifelong hunter, described his reaction to the proposal as a mix of curiosity and discomfort.

"Through my hunting career, I've never considered either of these species as game birds," he said. "I think of ear-pleasing tunes and beautiful ballets in the sky — not meat."

Langrell questions whether harvesting swans or mourning doves serves any meaningful purpose in modern Manitoba.

"I doubt very many people need swan meat to survive," he said. "It feels irrelevant in this day and age."

Stonewall's Murray Gillespie, a retired provincial wildlife biologist and former game bird manager with more than 45 years of experience tracking bird populations, also questions the necessity of the proposal. He said the

introduction of a tundra swan hunting season would lead to an "incidental harvest of trumpeter swans," risking setting back population numbers again. "Local nesting trumpeters would especially be vulnerable to harvest under the terms of this proposed season," he added.

He notes that Manitoba already provides ample waterfowl hunting opportunities and emphasizes the province's importance within continental migratory corridors.

"We are stewards of the land and resources," Gillespie said. "Any decision that might pose a threat to long-term species management needs to be looked at carefully and not taken lightly. Stakeholder consultation needs to be part of the process of developing new hunting seasons."

All of those speaking out stress that they are not anti-hunting. Instead, they say the issue comes down to conservation priorities, ethical considerations and maintaining public confidence in wildlife management.

They are encouraging Manitobans — hunters and non-hunters alike — to share their views with federal and

provincial leaders as consultations continue.

"The government is giving us an opportunity to respond," Duncan said. "It's important that we exercise our democratic rights and express our thoughts and feelings about it."

A provincial spokesperson with the Province of Manitoba is aware the federal government is seeking public comment for the proposed hunting seasons and said, "The province looks forward to the opportunity to review the results of this federal engagement."

Letters can be submitted or emailed to federal and provincial ministers at: Honourable Julie Dabrusin, Minister of the Environment, and Climate Change and Nature House of Commons, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0A6, julie.dabrusin@parl.gc.ca, and Honourable Ian Bushie, Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures, Room 301 - Legislative Bldg, 450 Broadway, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8, minnrif@manitoba.ca. Public inquiries can also be made to ECCC at 1-800-668-6767 or enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca.

## > LOCAL GROWER, FROM PG. 13

the pumpkin on the tractor when we picked them up to move them."

The competition itself added to the excitement.

"It was kind of like a game of poker," Williams said with a laugh. "There was a lot of posturing, embellishing and bluffing throughout the growing season. We never saw each other's pumpkins until the official weigh-off. We then had to show our hands as we weighed each grower's pumpkins one at a time. The Slater barn was filled with music, cheers and laughter."

When the final weights were announced, Williams stood atop the podium — twice.

"It was rewarding to be on the medal podium holding the championship belt with my family," he said. "Marc Van Hussen and family brought home the bronze with a pumpkin that was more than twice the size of last year's winner."

The leap in size from one year to the next was dramatic. In the previous season, the largest pumpkin weighed under 200 pounds. This year, the top three pumpkins tipped the scales at 1,022 pounds, 734 pounds and 414 pounds.

"Everyone grew bigger pumpkins," Williams said.

He strongly encourages others to attend the upcoming seminar.

"Having the correct genetics is super important to grow a giant pumpkin," he said, noting that free seeds are pro-

vided. "Art, Milan and other growers are very approachable. The seminar is a must."

For those who may find the idea intimidating, Williams offers simple advice.

"If you're committed to implementing the best practice, be prepared to commit the time," he said. "And remember, no different than farming, that you'll learn something new every year."

The Giant Pumpkin Growers Seminar runs from 1 to 3 p.m. March 28 in Miami. Admission requires an MGGA membership for growers, while others are welcome to attend by donation. Memberships cost \$10 for individuals or \$15 for families. Free refreshments and snacks will be provided.



Travis Williams, joined by his wife Jamie and family, celebrates at the official weigh-in after their 1,022-pound pumpkin captured first place in Balmoral's friendly giant pumpkin competition.

## > INNOVATION SHOWCASE, FROM PG. 21

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.

# sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

## Falcons face must-win after back-to-back heartbreak losses

By Kieran Reimer

The Lundar Falcons are on the brink.

After grabbing an early edge in their Capital Region Junior Hockey League best-of-five quarterfinal against the Selkirk Fishermen, Lundar has dropped back-to-back heartbreakers and now must win two straight to keep its season alive.

The series opened last Tuesday in Selkirk with a resilient 2-1 Falcons victory. Trailing 1-0 into the third period, Lundar found another gear midway through the frame. Cashton Barron evened the score before Jacob Smith struck just two minutes later to give the visitors their first lead of the night.

Goaltender Dylan Leclair shut the door from there, turning aside 37 shots to secure the road win and a 1-0 series advantage.

Momentum, however, shifted over the weekend.

Game 2 on Saturday in Lundar ended in a 2-1 overtime loss for the

Falcons. Liam Russell appeared to rescue the night with a late tying goal to force extra time, but Selkirk's Sage Courchene answered in overtime to even the series at one game apiece.

Sunday's Game 3 at the Selkirk Recreation Complex delivered another gut punch. Hayden Kaczorowski and Daniel Masters scored for Lundar, but the Fishermen struck with just 57 seconds remaining in regulation to seal a 3-2 victory and take a 2-1 series lead.

The Selkirk triumph gives the Fishermen their first opportunity to close out the series and advance to the CRJHL semifinals.

Lundar, meanwhile, will look to regroup on home ice and force a decisive Game 5.

Game 4 is set for Wednesday, March 4 at 8 p.m. at Lundar Arena. If necessary, Game 5 will be played Friday, March 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the Selkirk Recreation Complex.



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY BRETT MITCHELL

Quarterfinal action in the Capital Region Junior Hockey League has the Selkirk Fishermen holding a 2-1 lead over the Lundar Falcons in their best-of-five series. Selkirk rebounded from a 2-1 Game 1 loss to claim a 2-1 overtime win in Game 2 and a 3-2 victory in Game 3. Game 4 is set for March 4 in Lundar, with Game 5, if necessary, scheduled for March 6 in Selkirk.



To see more photos of your favourite Interlake Athletes

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THE EXPRESS WEEKLY NEWS

# Roper Romp theme highlights Arborg Ladies Bonspiel



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY KIM MASIAK

The Arborg Curling Club hosted 16 teams for its "Roper Romp — Martinis & Moomoos" themed Arborg Ladies Bonspiel, which featured a Saturday evening costume contest and games with plenty of participants dressed as Mrs. Roper from Three's Company. Photos, left to right: First event winners Kara Peiluck, Doriane Johnson, Aurora Peiluck and Tracy MacVicar; second event winners Alexis Magnusson, Kenna Sahaidak, Olivia Magnusson and Meagan Klym; third event winners Judy Colwell, Cheryl Martinez, Jen Wachal and Diane Sigvaldason.

## Cougars claim zone title



EXPRESS PHOTO BY LORI COMBOT

Zone 5A champion Fisher Branch Cougars varsity boys basketball team. Back row: Nathan Lee (coach), Jero Tacad, Taylor Vandersteen, Ryder Gauthier, Aiden Cameron, Hunter Hawkins, Sebastian Hnatiuk, Aaron Baril. Front row: Ram Sta. Ana, Ren Sta. Ana.

By Lana Meier

The Fisher Branch Cougars are back on top in Zone 5A varsity boys basketball.

Fisher Branch captured the Zone 5A Varsity Boys Basketball Championship on Feb. 25 in St. Laurent, earning their first banner since the 1993-94 season.

In the opening semifinal, the Cou-

gars defeated the Arborg Athletics 68-59 to advance to the final. The second semifinal saw Riverton knock off host St. Laurent/Aurèle-Lemoine 62-54.

That set up a championship clash between Fisher Branch and Riverton, with the Cougars prevailing 63-55 to secure the zone title and end a more than three-decade championship drought.

## Ice Dawgs battling to keep season alive

By Kieran Reimer

The Arborg Ice Dawgs are fighting to keep their season alive as their Capital Region Junior Hockey League quarterfinal series shifts back to home ice.

Trailing 2-1 in the best-of-five matchup against the La Broquerie Habs, Arborg must win both Game 4 and a potential Game 5 to advance.

The Ice Dawgs opened the series last Monday with a 4-0 loss at the HyLife Centre. Despite firing 34 shots on Habs all-star netminder Jaxon Loewen, Arborg was unable to solve the La Broquerie goaltender.

They responded Thursday at the Arborg & District Arena with a 4-3 victory to even the series.

Brandon Burak scored twice in the first period to give Arborg a 2-1 lead after 20 minutes. Brody Maxwell and Noah Saunders extended the advantage to 4-1 with a goal each before the Habs mounted a

late push.

La Broquerie scored twice in the third period but could not find the equalizer past Arborg goaltender Paxton Moore, who turned aside 44 shots in the win.

The series returned to La Broquerie on Saturday, where the Habs claimed an 8-2 victory in Game 3, despite being outshot 34-32.

Bradley Kemkaran and Dainen Jacobson scored third-period goals for Arborg to cut the deficit to 7-2 before La Broquerie added one more.

With the win, the Habs head to Arborg looking to close out the series, while the Ice Dawgs aim to force a winner-take-all Game 5 back at the HyLife Centre.

Due to press deadlines, the result of Monday's Game 4 was unavailable.

### UPCOMING GAME:

- Game 5 — Wednesday, March 4, 8 p.m., HyLife Centre (if necessary)

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# sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

## Gimli trio competes at Prairie RockFest in Moose Jaw

By E. Antonio

Interlake curlers went head-to-head with the Prairies' best at the U15 RockFest Prairies in Moose Jaw after earning their spots through a province-wide skills competition.

In total, 96 athletes aged 11 to 15 from Manitoba and Saskatchewan took to the ice, showcasing their skills and passion for the sport. RockFest is a national youth development initiative hosted by Curling Canada, designed to help young athletes learn, grow and compete in a fun, supportive environment.

To earn a spot at the Prairie event, curlers first had to qualify at one of several Manitoba competitions, where they performed a series of skill-based shots and accumulated points. The top 15 male and top 15 female competitors in the province advanced to the Prairie competition, including Gimli Curling Club athletes Taryn Gibson, Alice Boaz and Bella Einarson.

Gimli Curling Club coach Jaz Boaz, who is also Alice's father, said RockFest was a great opportunity to expose the athletes to a new environment.

The athletes said they enjoyed their

experience both on and off the ice and were proud of how they performed.

Fifteen-year-old Taryn, who finished fourth overall, said she appreciated the chance to curl with new teammates, as it exposed her to "different ways that others communicate as a team and different strategies that people have," adding that competing out of province made the experience even more memorable. She was impressed by the Temple Gardens Centre, calling it an "amazing facility." Taryn said she hopes to continue growing as an athlete while ensuring the sport always remains fun.

Alice, 14, said the rink was the warmest ice surface they had played on all season, something she welcomed since she was not as cold as usual. She advanced to the finals but said her highlight was "chicken wings and milkshakes at Déjà Vu Café." Overall, she said she learned valuable lessons about improving her game and plans to apply that knowledge at the Curl Manitoba Jamboree later this season.

Bella, 15, described the tournament as "challenging in new ways" because it focused on individual competition rather than team play. "The highlight



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Gimli Curling Club athletes Taryn Gibson, Alice Boaz and Bella Einarson competed at the U15 RockFest Prairies Feb. 21–23 in Moose Jaw, Sask.

of my weekend was definitely learning from different coaches and meeting so many new people," she added.

"This tournament taught me that curling isn't just a team sport — it also involves a lot of personal work."

## Carruthers announces retirement from competitive curling

By Haley Cvar

Canadian curler Reid Carruthers of West St. Paul has announced his retirement from competitive curling after more than two decades in the sport, closing the chapter on a career that included national titles, international appearances and a lasting impact on the province's curling community.

Carruthers shared the news in a written statement, saying the decision comes with mixed emotions but a deep sense of gratitude.

"After an extraordinary 20-plus years in competitive curling, it's with a heavy heart that I am announcing my retirement from the sport," he wrote.

Carruthers described curling as one of the defining parts of his life, pointing to the friendships, experiences and lessons gained along the way.

"Curling's been a huge part of my identity and although it will be hard to fill that void, I am very much looking forward to the next chapter in life," he said. "I am very much looking forward to spending more time with my son."

The Winnipeg curler's career spanned junior, men's and mixed disciplines, and he recently learned he will be inducted into the Manitoba Curling Hall of Fame alongside longtime teammate Derek Samagalski — an honour he called an under-



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Reid Carruthers delivers a rock during competition at the 2025 Montana's Brier. The West St. Paul curler announced his retirement from competitive curling after more than 20 years in the sport.

statement.

Throughout his statement, Carruthers thanked teammates, coaches, family and fans who supported him throughout his career, saying their encouragement made his journey possible.

"To my current team: BJ, Catlin, Connor, Kyle. Thank you, gentlemen, for being the best group of guys I could curl with," he wrote. "Lots of great memories I'll cherish forever on and off the ice."

He also paid tribute to coaches and mentors, including the late Alex McInnes, Norm Gould and Dan Carey, as well as longtime coach Rob Meakin.

Carruthers said he leaves competitive curling at peace with his decision and proud of what the sport has given him.

"As I step away from competitive play, I'm not filled with sadness, but with gratitude and pride," he wrote. "I am at peace with the decision as I leave the sport with lasting friendships, unforgettable memories, and a deep appreciation for everything curling has taught me — discipline, resilience, teamwork, and heart."

While retiring from elite competition, Carruthers said he does not plan to step away from curling entirely and hopes to remain involved through coaching, mentorship or occasional events.

# get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



## St. Patrick's Day Stew

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley  
Sprinkle beef chunks with 1 teaspoon salt. In large pot over medium-high heat, heat olive oil.

Pat beef dry with paper towels and add to pot, working in batches to avoid crowding pot. Cook until browned on one side then flip and brown.

Add garlic cloves to pot with beef and saute 30 seconds, or until fragrant. Add beef stock, water, beer, wine, tomato paste, sugar, thyme, Worcestershire sauce and bay leaves. Stir.

Bring mixture to simmer then reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

In separate pot over medium heat, melt butter. Add onions and carrots; saute until golden, about 15 minutes.

After beef mixture simmers 1 hour, add onions, carrots and potatoes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Simmer uncovered until beef and vegetables are tender, about 40 minutes. Discard bay leaves and spoon excess fat.

Sprinkle with parsley and serve.  
Photo courtesy of Unsplash

Recipe adapted from Simply Recipes  
Prep time: 30 minutes  
Cook time: 1 hour, 40 minutes  
Servings: 6  
1 1/4 pounds marbled chuck beef stew meat, cut into 1 1/2-inch chunks  
1 teaspoon salt, plus additional to taste, divided  
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
6 garlic cloves, minced  
4 cups beef stock  
2 cups water  
1 cup extra stout beer  
1 cup red wine  
2 tablespoons tomato paste  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 tablespoon dried thyme  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce  
2 bay leaves  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 large onion, chopped  
4 carrots, cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
3 pounds russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
freshly ground black pepper, to taste



## Luck O' the Irish Cupcakes

Preheat oven to 350°F and arrange rack in center of oven. Line 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners. In medium bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

In large bowl, using handheld mixer on medium-high speed, beat granulated sugar and butter until light and fluffy, 3-4 minutes. Add egg whites and vanilla; beat until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add sour cream and beat until combined.

Add half of dry ingredients to wet ingredients. Beat on low until incorporated. Add milk and beat to combine. Add remaining dry ingredients and beat until combined.

Add batter to liners until three-quarters full. Bake 19-22 minutes, until slightly golden on top.

Remove cupcakes from pan and cool completely.

To make frosting: In large bowl, using handheld mixer on medium-high speed, beat butter until fluffy. Add powdered sugar and beat until combined. Add heavy cream, vanilla and salt; beat until combined. Mix in green food coloring.

Transfer frosting to piping bag and pipe frosting onto cupcakes.

Photo courtesy of Unsplash

Recipe adapted from Delish  
Prep time: 30 minutes  
Cook time: 1 hour  
Yield: 12 cupcakes  
Cupcakes:  
1 2/3 cups all-purpose flour  
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt  
1 cup granulated sugar  
3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened  
3 large egg whites, at room temperature  
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract  
1/2 cup full-fat sour cream, at room temperature  
1/2 cup whole milk, at room temperature  
Frosting:  
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened  
4 cups powdered sugar  
3 tablespoons heavy cream  
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract  
1/8 teaspoon kosher salt  
green food coloring  
To make cupcakes: Preheat oven to 350

## Three signs you're not eating enough carbs

By Fitness Expert Julie Germaine Coram

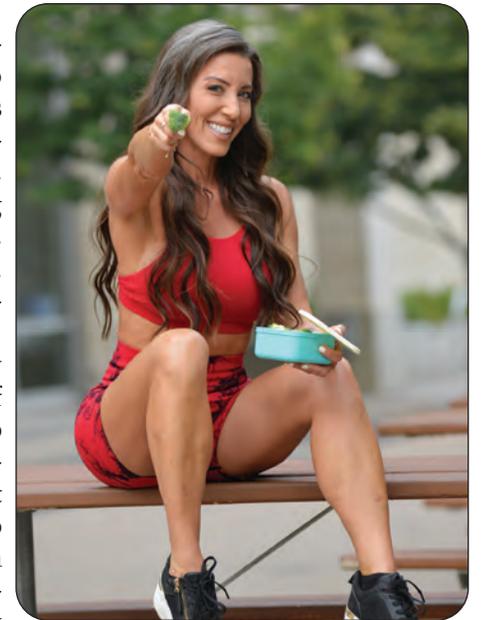
Carbs are a hot topic in diet culture, particularly with the keto diet. This approach to nutrition has been quite successful for individuals with weight-loss goals; however, many find that upon reintroducing foods such as fruit, bread or pasta, the scale climbs right back up again. This yo-yo dieting is not only frustrating, but unhealthy.

You need carbohydrates. They are your body's preferred source of energy — carbs are digested into simple sugars that fuel you throughout your busy day. Your workout requires energy, of course, but so do your workday, family life and even your time asleep. If you are not eating enough carbohydrates, you may experience negative side effects associated with deprivation, such as:

**Brain fog** — If you feel sluggish and sleepy during the day, you may not be consuming adequate carbohydrates. This obvious sign is important to acknowledge, as you cannot be your best self if you are unable to focus, have headaches or feel mentally exhausted.

**Anger issues** — Being quick to anger or easily irritated can indicate that you are lacking calories in the form of carbohydrates. Serotonin production is directly affected by carbohydrate intake. Serotonin is the hormone that helps us feel happy and content.

**Digestive issues** — Fibre, a non-digestible form of carbohydrate, is found in foods such as vegetables, fruits and whole grains. When you limit these foods in your regular diet, you deprive your body of nutrients that help you feel full after a meal and aid digestion. Without fibre, you risk feeling bloated or constipated, as it is essential for proper digestion.



Fitness Expert, Julie Germaine

The best way to reverse symptoms such as those listed above is to monitor your diet and take note of how many carbohydrates make it onto your plate. Canada's Food Guide suggests that a quarter of your plate should come from whole grains and about half from fruits and vegetables — is that what your meals look like?

Stop seeing carbs as "good" or "bad." Instead, pay attention to the timing of your energy-boosting meals (earlier in the day) and your food choices (non-processed whole grains and fresh produce).

Discuss your health goals or fitness struggles by scheduling a free online consultation at [www.calendly.com/juliegermaine](http://www.calendly.com/juliegermaine) or email [julie@juliegermaine.com](mailto:julie@juliegermaine.com).

Coach Julie Germaine Coram is dedicated to lifelong health. She is an active mom, registered personal trainer, two-time pro fitness champion, certified nutrition expert and fitness specialist. She has helped thousands worldwide improve their health since 2005.



## St. Patrick's Day Sandwiches

lemon juice  
lemon slices, for garnish (optional)  
In bowl, mix cream cheese spread, mozzarella cheese and salt well.  
Split English muffins in half. Cut each muffin half into shamrock shape. Spread cheese mixture over each muffin half.

Place three cucumbers on each "shamrock," one on each "leaf." Use green pepper slice as stem. Place cilantro leaf on top of each sandwich.

Sprinkle sandwiches with lemon juice and add lemon slices, for garnish, if desired.

Yield: 8 sandwiches  
8 ounces plain cream cheese spread, softened  
1 cup finely shredded mozzarella cheese  
salt  
4 English muffins  
24 slices cucumber  
8 thin slices green pepper  
fresh cilantro leaves

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## THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF ARMSTRONG REQUEST FOR QUOTE

### 2026/27 HOURLY EQUIPMENT RATES

The Rural Municipality of Armstrong is seeking quotations from qualified bidders for hourly rates for Private Owned Equipment for the 2026 / 2027 season.

Request for Quotation packages, including specifications and submission documents are available at the Municipal Office, 1094 PTH #17 Inwood or from the Municipality of Armstrong website [www.rmofarmstrong.com](http://www.rmofarmstrong.com)

Sealed submissions clearly marked "2026 Private Owned Equipment Hourly Rates" will be received at the Municipal of Armstrong office, located at 1094 PTH #17, Inwood, MB up until 12:00pm on Tuesday, March 17, 2026.

All inquires related to Request for Quote should be directed to Angie Dzuba at 204-278-3377.

The lowest or any hourly rate bid not necessarily accepted.

Quotations may be submitted to:  
Angie Dzuba, Senior Administrative Assistant  
RM of Armstrong  
1094 Highway 17  
Box 69, Inwood, MB ROC 1PO  
Phone: 204-278-3377 Fax: 204-278-3437

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### PROPERTY FOR SALE

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### APARTMENT FOR RENT

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Experience not required - willing to train the right person.

**For more information or to apply, please send your resume to:**

[TeulonBigWay@hotmail.com](mailto:TeulonBigWay@hotmail.com)

**Subject line:** Employment - Grocery



## RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF GIMLI INVITATION TO TENDER

**CLOSING DATE: Friday, March 13, 2026 at Noon**

The Rural Municipality of Gimli is accepting tenders for the following:

**RFT 2026-01 2026 EQUIPMENT RATES:** the RM of Gimli is seeking proposals from qualified bidders for hourly rates on various types of privately owned equipment for the purpose of establishing pay rates and hiring order of private equipment for the 2026 works season ending March 31, 2027. Contractors who do not submit pricing and/or do not hold a valid business license or business tax will not be considered for municipal projects.

Detailed tender package complete with specifications are available to interested bidders on the RM of Gimli website, [www.gimli.ca](http://www.gimli.ca), or at the Municipal Office, 62 2nd Avenue, between the hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Any questions or concerns related to the tenders can be directed to: Ron Hahlweg  
Director or Operations  
Rural Municipality of Gimli  
Phone: (204) 642-6688

*The RM of Gimli reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive irregularities and informalities therein, and to award the tender in the best interest of the RM of Gimli in its sole discretion. Lowest bid may not be accepted. Contractors must comply with Municipal requirements for liability insurance, WCB coverage and business licensing to be eligible to be awarded the contract.*

## NOTICE OF DIRECTOR ELECTIONS ELECTRONIC VOTING AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (the "AGM") MEMBERS OF ACCESS CREDIT UNION LIMITED (the "Credit Union")

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE CREDIT UNION

### VOTING FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

TAKE NOTICE THAT voting for the Board of Directors is open to all members who have a share at any Credit Union branch. Voting will be done by electronic ballot and will be tallied electronically by a third-party provider. Voting will be open from 9:00 a.m. CDT on Wednesday, the 25th day of March, 2026 until 5:00 p.m. CDT on Wednesday, the 8th of April, 2026. Members of the Credit Union are invited to vote online at [www.accessvotes.ca](http://www.accessvotes.ca). Each member may vote on a personal electronic device or should any member prefer, devices for the purpose of voting will be available at all branches of the Credit Union during operating hours.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TAKE NOTICE THAT the AGM of the members of the Credit Union will be held on Thursday, April 9, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. CDT via virtual means, for the following purposes:

1. 2025 Audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Report
2. Board of Directors Report
3. Appointment of Auditors
4. Director Elections Voting Results

All eligible members wishing to participate in the AGM are required to register online at [www.accesscu.ca](http://www.accesscu.ca) prior to April 9, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. CDT. Instructions for voting processes and how to ask questions will be displayed on the screen commencing at 6:45 p.m. CDT. These instructions will also be reviewed at the opening of the meeting.

More information can be found at: [www.accesscu.ca](http://www.accesscu.ca).

DATED this 5<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2026  
ACCESS CREDIT UNION LIMITED  
By Order of the Board of Directors



**BRIDAL SHOWER**



**Bridal Shower in Honour of Taylor Smith  
Bride Elect of David Johnston**  
Saturday, March 14, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.  
Royal Canadian Legion 161 Arborg  
Donations may be left at  
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**Estate & Moving**  
Wed., Mar. 18 @ 7:00 PM

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or 204-886-7027  
[mcsherrytld@gmail.com](mailto:mcsherrytld@gmail.com)

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Citizen and community input is an important part of the application process.

Please contact the Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba at 204-927-5300 if you have questions about this application.

Please contact your municipality if you have questions about zoning bylaws and requirements.

If you want to make a formal objection to this application, please send us your objection in writing by 4:30 p.m. on:

**MARCH 5, 2026**

You can email, mail or fax your objection. Please include your contact information.

Email: [objection@LGCamb.ca](mailto:objection@LGCamb.ca)  
Mail: LGCA Objections  
1055 Milt Stegall Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3G 0Z6  
Fax: 204-927-5385

- We respond to all formal objections and will work to resolve objections before issuing a licence.
- A copy of the objection, including the name of the person who submits the objection, will be provided to the licence applicant.
- Each person who submits an objection will be advised in writing of the outcome to the licence application.

LGCA - Liquor, Gaming & Cannabis Authority of Manitoba

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**THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF ARMSTRONG UNDER THE PLANNING ACT**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

The Council of the R.M. of Armstrong under the authority of the Planning Act will hold a PUBLIC HEARING at the date, time and location listed below:

**Tuesday March 24, 2026**  
**1:00pm.**

**Armstrong Municipal Office**  
**Civic # 1094 Lot 55 PTH 17, Inwood MB R0C 1P0**

Property owners are being notified in order to give them the opportunity to speak in support of or objection to the proposed conditional use and/or variation order.

**CONDITIONAL USE: # 2026-A-03**

**ROLL NO: 0237300.000**

**OWNER: Wayne & Michelle Hazelton**

**APPLICANT: CKT Contracting – Tyson Hazelton**

**AREA AFFECTED: Legal Description: SE5-19-1W  
Civic Address: 108032 Road 4W  
INWOOD, MANITOBA**

**ZONE: Agriculture Intensive Zoning District**

**SUBJECT: R.M. of Armstrong Zoning By-Law No. 6/04  
Part 13.3 11 General Industrial – Vehicle Repair**

**AUTOMOTIVE AND RECREATIONAL VEHICLE REPAIRS:** Retail repairs and maintenance services of new or used automobiles, motorcycles, snowmobiles, tent trailers, utility trailers, boats, travel trailers or similar light recreational vehicles or crafts.

**CONDITIONAL USE REQUESTED:** To allow for the existing shop to conduct public vehicle repairs & Government Safeties.

**WE REQUIRE ANYONE ATTENDING THE PUBLIC HEARING TO PRE-REGISTER BY NO LATER THAN 4:30 pm MONDAY MARCH 16, 2026, by calling or emailing the below email and/or number.**

For further information, please contact:  
Cori Audet – Permit & Planning Services  
Phone: 1 (204) 278-3377  
Rural Municipality of Armstrong  
Fax: 1 (204) 278-3437  
Box 69, Inwood, Mb R0C 1P0  
e-mail: [planning@rmofarmstrong.com](mailto:planning@rmofarmstrong.com)

Documents related to the matter to be considered at the hearing may be inspected or copied at the RM of Armstrong Office during normal office hours, Monday to Friday.

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**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**



**Early Childhood Educator II**

**Required for Arborg Play Group INC.**  
**Status: Full-time Permanent**  
**Start Date: April 13, 2026**

**Position Overview**

We are seeking a caring, enthusiastic, and reliable Early Childhood Educator II to join our team. The ideal candidate brings creativity, professionalism, and a genuine passion for early learning. This role involves working collaboratively with colleagues to plan and implement developmentally appropriate activities, maintain a safe and nurturing environment, and support positive interactions with children and families.

**Key Responsibilities**

- Plan and implement play based, developmentally appropriate experiences for children aged 2 to 6
- Foster a warm, inclusive, and responsive environment that supports children's emotional, social, physical, and cognitive development
- Maintain supervision, safety, and well being of all children at all times
- Build positive, respectful relationships with families and colleagues
- Assess the skills, abilities, interests and needs of children
- Document observations and daily communication as required
- Follow centre policies, licensing regulations, and health and safety guidelines
- Contribute to a collaborative, supportive team culture

**Qualifications**

- Current ECE II classification through Manitoba Child Care Qualifications and Training
- Current First Aid/CPR Level C (or willingness to obtain)
- Clear Criminal Record Check, Child Abuse Registry Check, and Vulnerable Sector Check (or willingness to obtain)
- Commit to Kids Canadian Protection for Children Training (or willingness to obtain)
- Strong communication skills and a commitment to professionalism
- Experience working in an early learning environment is an asset

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**Subject Line:** ECE II Application – [Your Name]

Applications will be accepted until March 23, 2026 or until the position is filled. We thank all applicants for their interest; only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

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## OBITUARY



**Patricia (Pat) Anne Dalman (nee Henderson)**  
February 7th, 1948 – February 23rd 2026

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our dear mother Pat Dalman at the age of 78 on February 23rd, 2026, at the Gimli Community Health Centre after a brief illness.

Pat was predeceased by her parents Jim and Win Henderson, her brother John (Jan), her husband of 36 years, Norm Dalman.

Left to cherish her memory are her daughters Kirsten (Steven) and Tannys (Sergio), and her beloved grandchildren Willow (Clayton), Soren and Asra and her partner Don Hayden.

Pat was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba and attended St. James Collegiate. After obtaining her teaching degree at the University of Manitoba, she started her career in education in Arborg and then Gimli, teaching for 35 years. Many who were taught by her will remember her kind heart and encouragement. She loved running

into her former students to chat and see where their lives had taken them.

Mom had a lifelong love of literature, bookshelves lined the walls of her home, she was always finding inspiration in the written word and was passionate about sharing that with her students.

Mom was the heart of every family gathering, a warm friend, and a steady, compassionate presence. She will be remembered for her quiet strength, unwavering generosity and love she poured into everything she did.

Family and friends are invited to join us for a Celebration of Life to be held Thursday, March 19th, 2:00 p.m. at Johnson Hall in the Gimli Waterfront Centre.

“Read a thousand books, and your words will flow like a river.” - Lisa See



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Gimli 204-642-7124  
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## OBITUARY



**Sandra Johansson**

Sandra Marilyn Johansson (nee Taylor, Burt) born September 15, 1945, in Toronto, Ontario, passed away on October 24, 2025.

Sandra is survived by her children, Jeffrey (Amanda) Burt and Jennifer (Brunel) Sabourin, her stepdaughter Jessica and four granddaughters—Abigail, Brooklyn, Rebecca, and Stephanie. She is also survived by her sister, Sharon (Phil) Northrup, her brother, Dennis Kaprawy, and many nieces and nephews.

Sandra was predeceased by her parents, Emil and Lillian Kaprawy, and her brother, Ken Taylor and husband Wally.

For full obituary see <https://cropro.com>

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. in Johnson Hall, Gimli Waterfront Centre, 94 – 1st Avenue, Gimli, MB.

## OBITUARY



**David Carl Plantz**

December 17, 1958 – February 21, 2026

Suddenly on February 21, 2026, David passed away at the St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg, MB with his wife Judy and family at his side.

In keeping with David's wishes, cremation has taken place and a private family gathering will take place at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to a local animal care facility or pet rescue.

Arrangements by:

ARNASON FUNERAL HOME  
Ashern – Lundar  
1-204-768-2072  
1-866-323-3593

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Please return to the RM office in person or via the mail or email address below.

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