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WEEKLY NEWS

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## High-flying fun

EXPRESS PHOTO BY NADIA SCHULTZ

Young fairgoers take to the skies aboard the Hang Glider ride during the 72nd annual Lundar Fair. The popular attraction, provided by Select Shows, was among the many midway rides and family activities that helped draw large crowds to the fairgrounds June 13 and 14. See next week's *Express Weekly News* for full coverage.

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# Province announces \$1.2M for Arborg Outdoor Sports Complex

By E. Antonio

The Manitoba government is contributing \$1.2 million toward the development of a new outdoor sports complex in Arborg, a project aimed at expanding and modernizing recreational opportunities in the community and surrounding region.

The funding is being provided through the province's Manitoba Growth, Renewal and Opportunities (GRO) program and will support the construction of new baseball diamonds and soccer fields. The announcement comes 15 months after plans were announced for a new personal care home to be built on the site of the current outdoor sports grounds.

Municipal and Northern Relations Minister Glen Simard said the investment is intended to help ensure residents continue to have access to quality recreation infrastructure while supporting active lifestyles and long-term community growth.

"Today's announcement is not just a government investment; it is the result of a community that refuses to settle for good enough," Simard said during the June 9 announcement. "This project reflects the community's

values of collaboration, resilience and a commitment to healthy, active living."

The new Arborg-Bifrost Outdoor Sports Complex will replace existing baseball and soccer facilities currently located on the site. Provincial officials noted the current fields are aging, undersized and in need of renewal.

The new location will be within a half-mile radius of Arborg, and ground will be broken as soon as the crops are off.

According to the province, the new complex is being designed as an inclusive and sustainable facility that will accommodate users of all ages and abilities. Planned features include accessibility measures that meet or surpass requirements under Manitoba's accessibility legislation, as well as energy-efficient and low-maintenance elements such as LED lighting, naturalized landscaping and durable playing surfaces.

"This new piece of recreational infrastructure ensures families in the region continue to have access to high-quality, accessible recreational spaces," Simard added. "But this project is more than just sports —



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY EMILY ANTONIO

Speakers and dignitaries joined local youth athletes during a June 9 announcement in Arborg celebrating a \$1.2-million provincial investment in the new Arborg-Bifrost Outdoor Sports Complex. Pictured are Arborg Deputy Mayor Ron Johnston, Arborg Mayor Peter Dueck, Manitoba Municipal and Northern Relations Minister Glen Simard and community supporter Mike Shachtay with local baseball and soccer players who will benefit from the new facility.

it's about creating a gathering place where children, youth, adults and seniors can connect, play and build community."

Arborg Mayor Peter Dueck described the project as the result of collaboration between the Town of Arborg, the

Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton, local volunteers and community sports groups. He said provincial funding is helping move the shared vision forward and will enhance recreation opportunities throughout the area for

Continued on page 3

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> SPORTS, FROM PG. 2

both residents and visitors.

He said he is proud of the partnerships, support and funding already received for the project.

"I am so proud that the province has decided to invest in this community and recognizes its importance," he added.

Mike Shachtay, a longtime Arborg resident and sports enthusiast, emphasized the importance of sports for people of all ages.

"Look at everything that comes because of sports. It could be soccer, it could be pickleball, it could be whatever it is, sports are very important," he said. "Lifelong friends are made because of sports."

He shared a photo of his baseball

team from 44 years ago and noted that he remains friends with many of the players to this day. He added that the impact of sports goes beyond Arborg, with many former athletes continuing their involvement in athletics throughout their lives and careers.

Simard echoed Shachtay's comments about the importance of sports, particularly baseball.

"Baseball can be a lifelong sport. You can play it all the way through adulthood. But also what it's about is being part of a team, being part of a community," he said. "I can tell you that it shapes a person, challenges them and helps define who they are."

The afternoon closed with Simard joining young Arborg baseball players for a few hits, catches and throws around the diamond.



Minister Simard tosses a baseball with local youth following the announcement of \$1.2 million in provincial funding for the outdoor sports complex.

# MPI expands response to storm-related vehicle damage

By Haley Cvar

Residents across the Selkirk and Interlake region dealing with hail or storm-related vehicle damage are being encouraged to file claims as soon as possible as Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) responds to an unprecedented surge in claims.

MPI reported June 15 that it has received approximately 20,000 claims since last week's severe weather event and remains on pace to exceed the highest number of claims ever re-

ceived from a single weather-related incident in Manitoba.

Customers in Selkirk can choose to have their vehicle assessed at MPI's dedicated Hail Response Centre in Winnipeg, obtain a damage estimate through an MPI-accredited repair shop or authorized paintless dent repair facility, or book an estimating appointment at the Selkirk MPI Service Centre by calling 204-985-7000 or toll-free at 1-800-665-2410.

Residents elsewhere in the Interlake

can either visit an accredited repair facility for a damage estimate or book an appointment at their nearest MPI Service Centre.

MPI is urging customers with drivable vehicles to report damage online at [openclaim.mpi.mb.ca](http://openclaim.mpi.mb.ca). Those whose vehicles are not drivable should contact MPI directly by phone so severe claims can be prioritized.

Customers with glass damage can also contact an accredited autobody or glass repair shop directly to open a claim and arrange temporary repairs.

MPI says customers may experience delays due to the high volume of claims but notes that staff are working around the clock to process claims and assist those affected by the storm.



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# Ashern residents find common ground through Reconciliation Circle

By E. Antonio

A local initiative aimed at fostering understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents will continue beyond its initial seven-week program after participants described the experience as both educational and meaningful.

Ashern's Circle for Reconciliation wrapped up in May after nine participants met weekly to discuss Indigenous history, contemporary issues and pathways toward reconciliation. Facilitated through the Lakeshore Family Resource Centre by Allison Staff and Denise Beardy — trained Circles for Reconciliation facilitators — the group plans to continue meeting under the name Ashern Circle.

Circles for Reconciliation is a Canadian relationship-building initiative created in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and its 94 Calls to Action. The program brings Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together in small discussion groups to build trust, foster understanding and develop meaningful relationships. Organizers strive to maintain an equal number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous par-



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Participants from Ashern met for seven weeks through the Circles for Reconciliation program, bringing together Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members to discuss reconciliation and build relationships. Regular meetings will continue under the name Ashern Circle. Pictured is the group's meeting space. For more information, email allisons.lfrc@gmail.com

Participants to ensure all perspectives are represented.

"Every Canadian has to do their part in reconciliation. Everyone needs to know what happened to First Nations, Inuit and Métis people of these

lands," said Grace Schedler, a Circles for Reconciliation advisory committee member. "My parents, grandparents and my ancestors tell us it will take us longer to heal because our ways have been destroyed in every way possible. I am only at the beginning stages of reconciliation, but I am

willing to have these conversations with non-Indigenous people so that they can assist on the healing journey — we have to live together in this country."

Staff said the Ashern group quickly

Continued on page 7

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# Record crowds celebrate Pride at Gimli Parade



EXPRESS FACEBOOK PHOTOS FROM GIMLI PRIDE

A colourful crowd marches through Gimli during the 2026 Gimli Pride Parade on Sunday. Organizers said the parade was the largest in the event's history, drawing hundreds of participants and supporters to the lakeside community.

By Patricia Barrett

Gimli showed its pride last weekend as hundreds of people took part in the town's 2026 pride event to recognize and celebrate the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

The three-day celebration was a collaboration with the community, along with sponsors such as the municipality and local businesses, and it stood as a declaration that they stand up for diversity and value inclusiveness.

The opening ceremonies included raising the pride flag over Gimli Beach. The Pride March on Sunday drew hundreds of participants. Accompanied by the FAF Marching Band, people walked from the bandstand to Gimli Park, where they min-

gled, enjoyed cupcakes and took part in crafts and other activities.

The weekend included musical entertainment, a movie night in conjunction with the Gimli International Film Festival and the New Iceland Heritage Museum, a queer comedy night, the lighting of the Viking statue in rainbow colours, a vendors' market and a women's dance party and social.

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# get informed

NEWS > VIEWS > GIMLI > ARBORG > HIGHWAY 6 > SURROUNDING AREAS

## Passing lanes for Highway 8 under construction: province commits \$18.3 million to improve safety

By Patricia Barrett

The provincial government announced last week it has committed funding to passing lanes on Highway 8 and road safety improvements in the RM of St. Clements.

Construction of the passing lanes on Highway 8 has begun and will cost an estimated \$18.3 million.

The combined \$21.2-million investment for both projects will support growing traffic volumes, improve safety and enhance connectivity.

“Our government is pleased to share these important infrastructure investments with municipal partners as we connect with communities across the province,” said transportation and infrastructure minister Lisa Naylor in a June 10 news release. “These projects will improve road conditions, enhance passing opportunities and support safe, reliable travel for residents, local businesses and visitors to the Interlake region.”

The province first announced the passing lanes in September 2025. Highway 8 is a heavily travelled route to and from the Interlake region and can experience significant traffic congestion during peak travel periods, particularly during the summer tourism season.

Passing lanes are designed to improve traffic flow and safety by providing designated opportunities for



EXPRESS FILE PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

Four sets of passing lanes will be built on Highway 8 between Highway 67 and PR 231 in Gimli. The junctions of highways 8 and 67 is shown here looking south.

vehicles to overtake slower-moving traffic without crossing into oncoming lanes. Typically, one lane shifts toward the shoulder while an additional lane in the same direction allows faster-moving vehicles to pass.

Four sets of passing lanes will be constructed between Highway 67, near the Stonewall and Selkirk turn-offs, and PR 231 near Gimli. Each passing lane will be approximately two kilometres long.

A spokesperson for the department said the passing lanes are now under construction.

“The locations of the passing lanes, which are currently under construction, have been selected to avoid high-volume intersections and driveways, bridges, culverts and horizontal curves,” he said.

The project is expected to be completed by the fall of 2027.

Provincial road improvements in the RM of St. Clements include surface restoration on Highway 59 from Highway 44 to Highway 4 in the southbound lanes and from Highway 44 to PR 317 in the northbound lanes.

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# Province invests \$21.2M in Interlake highway improvements

By Haley Cvar

The Manitoba government is investing \$21.2 million in highway infrastructure upgrades in the Interlake region, including projects in the Rural Municipality of St. Clements and near Winnipeg Beach.

Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Lisa Naylor announced the funding, noting the projects are intended to improve road safety, support increasing traffic volumes and enhance connectivity for residents,

businesses and visitors.

"Our government is pleased to share these important infrastructure investments with municipal partners as we connect with communities across the province," Naylor said in a news release. "These projects will improve road conditions, enhance passing opportunities and support safe, reliable travel for residents, local businesses and visitors to the Interlake region."

In the RM of St. Clements, surface restoration work will be completed

on Provincial Trunk Highway 59. The projects include \$1.1 million in southbound surface restoration between PTH 44 and PTH 4, as well as \$1.8 million in northbound surface restoration between PTH 44 and Provincial Road 317. Both projects are scheduled for construction this summer.

The largest investment is planned along PTH 8 near Winnipeg Beach, where the province will spend \$18.3 million to reconstruct the passing lane between PTH 67 and PR 231. Con-

struction is expected to be completed by fall 2027.

According to the province, the improvements will extend the lifespan of the highways, improve traffic flow and provide safer passing opportunities for motorists, particularly during peak travel periods.

The projects form part of Manitoba's ongoing investment in transportation infrastructure aimed at improving safety and mobility across the province.

## > RECONCILIATION CIRCLE, FROM PG. 4

developed into a welcoming and respectful space where participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences and viewpoints.

"Equality is very important to us," she said. "I am so in awe of everybody's efforts. It went so well, and I am proud of everyone who took part."

Among the participants were Ashern residents Merle Klyne, a Métis educator, and his wife, Patsy.

Interested in Truth and Reconciliation initiatives and the Calls to Action, Klyne said he was drawn to the program because of its grassroots approach to creating change at the community level.

"I want to see the recommendations we can make and see what changes can be made at a local, community level," he said.

Patsy said she joined for similar reasons, hoping to help bridge divisions that sometimes exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

"We both had concerns about the unhealthy attitudes that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Too often it's a case of us against them," she said. "We wanted to be able to come together and learn from one another."

Each session followed a similar for-

mat, beginning with a smudging ceremony, a land acknowledgment and a moment of silence before moving into themed discussions using a talking stick. Topics included residential schools, relationships with the land, misconceptions and issues connected to special observances such as Red Dress Day and Orange Shirt Day.

Klyne said he entered the sessions without many expectations but quickly came to appreciate the respectful atmosphere and ceremonial aspects of the program.

"Everyone was very good at listening to one another," he said.

Patsy said hearing participants share their experiences and perspectives helped deepen her understanding of Indigenous history and contemporary issues.

"It was very interesting hearing what others had to say," she said. "It was real information pertaining to real Indigenous history."

She added that her appreciation for Indigenous peoples and cultures has grown significantly since taking part in the circle.

According to Klyne, education remains one of the most important tools for advancing reconciliation.

Quoting the late Murray Sinclair, Klyne noted: "Education got us into

this mess and education will get us out of it."

He believes education is needed at all levels to help people better understand both historical and current realities. He also praised Ashern Central School principal Tracey Kinkead for her efforts to promote Indigenous education within the school.

"She is motivated to use the Circles for Reconciliation in a way that helps promote Indigenous education programming in schools," he said. "She's gone out of her way to support that kind of education."

Kinkead said she was excited to take part in the group and that it was a pleasure to be among such respectful and resourceful community members.

"It was a wonderful opportunity to make new connections for our school," she added.

Although the formal Circle for Reconciliation sessions have concluded, participants plan to continue meeting under the name Ashern Circle.

The group will operate independently from the Lakeshore Family Resource Centre while maintaining a format similar to the original sessions. Meetings are expected to be held monthly throughout June, July and August before returning to a weekly schedule in the fall.

Anyone interested in participating can contact Allison Staff at allisons.lfrc@gmail.com for more information about upcoming meeting dates, times and locations.



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# Gimli Garden Club in full bloom for summer season

By Lana Meier

With planting season underway, members of the Gimli Garden Club have been hard at work helping beautify the community while preparing for a busy summer of activities.

Over the past several weeks, club members have participated in a variety of projects and events aimed at promoting gardening and community involvement.

Earlier this spring, several members took part in a clay figurine workshop. Their handmade creations are now on display at Viking Park, showcasing both artistic talent and community spirit. Club representatives extended their thanks to the Gimli Art Club for providing space for the workshop.

One of the club's largest recent initiatives was its annual planting day. Volunteers planted hundreds of flowers throughout the community, adding colour and vibrancy to public spaces across Gimli.

The club offered special thanks to Nadine Gislason for her efforts in organizing the project, as well as the RM of Gimli for partnering with the club to help make the community beautification effort possible.

The Gimli Garden Club also hosted its annual Plant and Bake Sale on June 13. Organizers described the event as a tremendous success, providing an opportunity for gardening enthusiasts to connect while raising funds to



One of the finished figurines created during the workshop.

support the club's activities.

Looking ahead, members are finalizing plans for their upcoming garden competition, along with a series of garden tours and guest speakers planned for the months ahead.

The club welcomes new members and encourages anyone interested in gardening to attend its next meeting, scheduled for June 22 at 2 p.m. at the Gimli Multipurpose Building behind New Horizons 55+.

As gardens continue to flourish throughout the community, the Gimli Garden Club remains committed to fostering a love of gardening while helping keep Gimli in full bloom.



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Members of the Gimli Garden Club pose with one of the finished planters featured during the club's annual planting day. Volunteers planted hundreds of flowers throughout Gimli, helping add colour and vibrancy to public spaces across the community.



Members of the Gimli Garden Club took part in a clay figurine workshop this spring, creating decorative pieces that are now on display at Viking Park.

## Province invests \$915,000 in Arborg water infrastructure project

By E. Antonio

The Manitoba government has announced a \$915,000 investment in a major water infrastructure project in Arborg as part of a broader \$4.3-million commitment to water and wastewater improvements in rural communities across Manitoba.

The funding, provided through the Manitoba Water Services Board, supported Arborg's \$2.4-million watermain renewal and secondary supply well project.

According to the province, the completed project renewed approximately 1,080 metres of watermain, replaced valves and hydrants, and included the construction and mechanization of a new groundwater supply well.

Municipal and Northern Relations Minister Glen Simard said the investment reflects the province's commitment to ensuring reliable water and wastewater services for Manitobans.

"By partnering with municipalities, we are strengthening critical infrastructure, supporting local develop-

ment and improving quality of life for families and businesses across the province," Simard said in a June 8 news release.

Town of Arborg chief administrative officer Cindy Stansell said the project was identified through a comprehensive water and sewer system assessment and upgrading study completed in 2021 by engineering firm WSP in collaboration with the Manitoba Water Services Board.

"The study provided a comprehensive review of the town's water distribution system and identified critical infrastructure priorities required to maintain reliable service for residents and businesses both now and into the future," she said.

The project addressed two major priorities identified in that review: the replacement of aging watermains and the creation of a secondary water supply well.

Stansell said portions of the town's

older cast-iron watermain infrastructure had reached the end of their useful life, while the assessment also identified the need for a backup water source.

Prior to the upgrades, Arborg's water system relied on a single production well. While the existing system continued to provide safe drinking water, the town faced risks associated with depending on a single source of supply.

"The secondary well is one of the most significant components of the project from a long-term operational perspective," Stansell said. "Having a reliable standby water source reduces the risk associated with depending on a single well and helps ensure continuity of service for residents, businesses, institutions and emergency services should an unexpected failure occur."

The new well also strengthens the town's ability to meet water demands during peak usage periods and en-

hances emergency preparedness, she added.

Mayor Peter Dueck welcomed the provincial contribution, noting the importance of maintaining essential infrastructure.

"This investment in Arborg's water infrastructure helps ensure residents and businesses continue to have access to safe, reliable drinking water for years to come," Dueck said in the provincial announcement. "We appreciate the Manitoba government's support as we continue to strengthen essential services and support future growth in our community."

According to Stansell, replacing aging watermains will help reduce the likelihood of breaks, service interruptions and costly maintenance, while the overall project improves the reliability and resilience of the town's water system.

She said the investment also positions Arborg for future residential

# Riverton Reunion Days July 3-5 celebrating milestones, opening Reggie Leach Museum

By Patricia Barrett

If you like non-stop action with maybe an hour or two of downtime for rest and refreshments, Riverton is the place to be in early July as the town hosts its Reunion Days celebration.

From July 3 to 5, locals and visitors alike will be treated to healthy doses of history, street and hall dancing, games, fireworks, food and multiple anniversary celebrations. Plus, NHL hockey legend Reggie Leach, better known as the Riverton Rifle, is coming home to help his hometown celebrate.

There are four milestones to celebrate: Riverton is marking its 150th anniversary; the Djorfung Ladies Aid service group is celebrating its 125th anniversary; Riverton Collegiate is celebrating its 65th anniversary; and the Riverton & District Friendship Centre is celebrating its 45th anniversary.

What better way to kick off the festivities than with a barbecue at the friendship centre, a parade, opening remarks with dignitaries and cake, a street dance, a beer garden and fireworks? That all takes place on Friday beginning at 5 p.m.

Saturday's events start with not one but two pancake breakfasts, followed by the unveiling at 10 a.m. of the Reggie Leach sign on Highway 8. Leach will also open his eponymous museum room at the Riverton Transportation & Heritage Centre at 2 p.m.

The museum room is housed in the former Canadian Pacific Railway station, which showcases Riverton's history and memorabilia.

Former heritage centre board member and current Djorfung Ladies Aid member Ruth Ann Furgala said the grand opening of the Reggie Leach Museum Room will take place Saturday at 2 p.m. But a few hours before

the opening, Leach will be at the heritage centre to chat with the public.

The town celebrated the expansion of the heritage centre in 2024 after receiving grants from the provincial government and other organizations, as well as the naming of the Reggie Leach Museum Room. At that time, there were only a few artifacts in Leach's room.

"Now, the museum room is full, and the original parts of the train station have artifacts and details along with them," said Furgala. "This is the first time anybody will get to see it. Reggie is opening the room."

Djorfung Ladies Aid chair Vickie Johnson said the long-standing community service group is celebrating its 125th anniversary with commemorative signage created by Design Canada. The group will cut a ribbon at the heritage centre on Saturday at 11 a.m.

"The sign contains the history of the Djorfung Ladies Aid, what they're doing at present and a photo of our group. It will be placed by the pergola uptown that we had installed in 2024," said Johnson. "Our remarks at the heritage centre will acknowledge that our group is 125 years old. To me, that's a very special thing. How many groups can say they've been alive for 125 years?"

The ladies aid will be selling a commemorative cookbook during the weekend.

"We did a cookbook in 2011 and we decided to do a second edition, plus add more pictures and history to it," said Johnson. "The recipes will be from past members and family members. It's pretty cool."

The Djorfung Ladies Aid, which currently has nine members, was started in 1901. Many of its original members were girls as young as 12 and other women who wanted to make a differ-



EXPRESS PHOTO BY VICKIE JOHNSON

Members of the Djorfung Ladies Aid and the year they joined. Back row, from left: Gerri Sigurdson (2024), Valerie Hokanson (2003), Linda Wotton (2019), Theresa Bjornson (2022) and Louise Schellenberg (1988). Front row, from left: Jessica Laine Firman (2018), Vickie Johnson (1986), Ruth Ann Furgala (1988) and Anne Rozecki (1989).

ence in the community, said Johnson. The group fundraises to support projects that enhance quality of life in the community. New members are welcome to join.

The ladies aid will also co-host Riverton Collegiate's 65th anniversary celebration on Saturday from 5 p.m. to 1 a.m. at Riverton Hall. The school is holding a fundraising social that night at the curling rink to support a newly created RCI Alumni Award

through the Westshore Community Foundation.

If you need a breather on Saturday or Sunday, the town's walking bridge over the Icelandic River provides a refreshing vista.

Visitors can also learn about the Icelandic pioneers who settled in the area in the late 19th century. Engimyri House, also known as Meadow Mire,

Continued on page 11

**RIVERTON REUNION DAYS 2026**

FRIDAY, JULY 3	SATURDAY, JULY 4	SUNDAY, JULY 5
5:00 PM – 8:00 PM BBQ at Riverton & District Friendship Centre	8:00 AM – 11:00 AM Pancake Breakfast at the Church of Nazareth	12:00 PM – 3:00 PM Meet and Greet with Reggie Leach at Riverton Transportation Heritage Centre (RTHC)
7:00 PM Parade	8:00 AM – 11:00 AM MMF Pancake Breakfast at Riverton Memorial Arena	2:00 PM Opening of Reggie Leach Museum at RTHC
7:30 PM – 7:45 PM Opening Remarks at Riverton Transportation Heritage Centre (RTHC) followed by Cake and Coffee	10:00 AM Unveiling of Reggie Leach Sign on Highway 8	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM Open House at the Riverton-Bilrot Fire Department
8:00 PM – 10:45 PM Street Dance at Riverton & District Friendship Centre (RDFC)	11:00 AM Djorfung Ladies Aid Ribbon Cutting at the Riverton Transportation Heritage Centre	12:00 PM – 4:00 PM RDFC Community Hangout
11:00 PM Fireworks at RCI Grounds	11:00 AM – 4:00 PM Engimyri Open House	12:00 PM – 4:00 PM Riverton-Bilrot Parks & Recreation – Kids Games & Activities at Centennial Park
8:00 PM – 12:00 AM Beer Gardens at Riverton Memorial Arena	11:30 AM – 1:30 PM BBQ at the Riverton MCC Thrift Store Parking Lot	5:30 PM – 1:00 AM Djorfung Ladies Aid & RCI – Banquet, Dance and Silent Auction at Riverton Rec Hall
	<b>ALL DAY</b> Riverton Minor Hockey – Ball Hockey at Riverton Memorial Arena	8:00 PM – 1:00 AM RCI Alumni Award Fundraising Social at Riverton Curling Club (for level) \$20/ticket at the door
	12:00 PM – 2:00 PM BBQ at Riverton Collegiate Open House	1:00 PM – 2:00 PM Bifrost-Riverton Senior Resource – Merchandise Bazaar at Centennial Park

Riverton Reunion Days returns July 3-5 with a packed weekend of celebrations, including a parade, pancake breakfasts, the unveiling of a highway sign honouring Reggie Leach, family activities, fireworks, live music and community gatherings throughout the village.

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# Interlake Region Red River Métis national election candidates

By E. Antonio

Voting for the Red River Métis National Election began June 13 and continues through June 23. Red River Métis citizens are electing a new Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) Cabinet, including a president, regional vice-presidents and regional executive officers from each of the MMF's seven regions. In the Interlake Region, voters will elect one vice-president and two regional executive officers to represent the region at the MMF Cabinet table and provide leadership and support to local communities.

The following Interlake candidates were invited to participate in this Q&A and answer three questions about their priorities, experience and vision for the region.

## Vice-President for the Interlake Region:

- Alfred "Buck" Anderson
- John (Jack) Park
- Carl Chartrand

## Regional Executive Officer for the Interlake Region:

- Mona Buors
- Keith Ginther
- Clint Webb

## All candidates were asked the following questions:

1. What do you believe is the most important issue facing Red River Métis citizens today, and what specific actions would you take to address it if elected?

2. How would you work to ensure the voices and priorities of citizens in this region are heard and represented within the Manitoba Métis Federation?

3. Why are you seeking elected office, and what skills, experience or perspective would you bring to the role that would benefit Red River Métis citizens?

**Editor's note:** Responses have been

published as submitted and have been edited only for minor spelling, punctuation and style.



Alfred "Buck" Anderson

### Alfred "Buck" Anderson

1. Being recognized. Acknowledged rights. Raise awareness of our Métis culture and heritage, which would be through our music and dance, our history, and our language. Bring it into the schools, including dance, music, and flags.

2. Attend local and town hall meetings. Listen to the people and bring forward their ideas and concerns. Help guide them through programs that the MMF offers, such as housing, pharmacy, HELP (Home Enhancement Loan Program), post-secondary education, sports, and small businesses.

I encourage our locals to partner with each other, as well as schools and RMs.

3. To make a difference and continue to enhance the lives of the people. I have many skills that pertain to the role, including organizing events, access to several Métis entertainers, and being confident and comfortable with public speaking. I served two terms as Selkirk Local vice-chair and four terms (16 years) as Interlake vice-president. I also organized National Indigenous Peoples Day for 19 years and created the Métis Music Van during COVID-19.



John (Jack) Park

### John (Jack) Park

1. Knowing where we sit within the Constitution of this great country of Canada. Our President, Cabinet, and Senior Officials have worked hard at getting the Métis Treaty passed at the highest level of the country, and we are at the second reading stage at this time. Once that treaty has passed all the necessary stages of approval, we will be in the position of governing ourselves accordingly, at the direction of the citizens that we represent. Lastly, we have achieved that recognition through our province with the recognition of Louis Riel as the First Premier and Founding Father of Manitoba.

2. By continually updating our communication processes and ensuring that we reiterate those positions regularly with updates at Local Meetings, Regional Meetings, Annual General Assemblies, as well as through social and mainstream media.

3. Serving Métis citizens is in my blood. I have been the Regional Administrator for 16 years, at the request of the current Vice President and Regional Executive member. In my role as Chairman of Métis N4 Construction, I have worked to ensure the Interlake region remains a strong Métis community with sustainable economic growth in the areas of

Energy and Infrastructure and Construction Management. Lastly, with the Team Interlake approach, I will be able to mentor our Regional Executive in being ready to take over the role when I retire. Our Elders have told us that mentorship is critical in preparing our youth for the future.



Carl Chartrand

### Carl Chartrand

1. I believe one of the most important issues facing Red River Métis citizens is the rising cost of living. If elected, I would advocate for an action plan that explores practical ways to provide meaningful benefits through the Métis citizen card, including potential tax relief opportunities such as discounts on fuel, hydro, and other essential costs. The goal is to ensure the citizen card delivers real value that supports citizens in their everyday lives.

2. I would ensure the voices of Interlake citizens are heard by shifting toward more direct, accessible engagement through one-on-one meetings and small group gatherings. This approach makes it easier for Elders, youth, and families to participate without barriers. I would ensure feedback from these sessions is documented, tracked, and brought forward to the Manitoba Métis Federation, so citizen priorities are acted on and not overlooked.

3. I am seeking elected office to better represent citizens in the Interlake Region. I bring 14 years of leadership experience focused on communication, engagement, and community support. I understand the importance of listening to citizens and ensuring their voices are heard. If elected, I will work to strengthen participation, improve representation, and ensure that decisions made within the Manitoba Métis Federation reflect the priorities of the people I serve.



Mona Buors

### Mona Buors

1. The most important issue facing our citizens is ensuring that every Red River Métis person, regardless of where they live, feels connected, supported, and able to access the programs, services, and opportunities available to them. If elected, I will focus on strengthening communication, increasing outreach to communities throughout the Interlake, and advocating for equitable access to housing, education, health, and economic opportunities so no citizen feels left behind.

2. Representation begins with listening. I will be accessible, visible, and committed to regular engagement with citizens across the Interlake through community meetings, local events, and open communication. I will bring citizens' concerns,

ideas, and priorities directly to the MMF leadership table and advocate for decisions that reflect the diverse needs of our families, Elders, youth, and communities throughout the region.

3. I am seeking this role because I care deeply about our people, our culture, and our future. My experience working with communities, building partnerships, and advocating for citizens has taught me the importance of collaboration, respect, and accountability. I bring a strong commitment to service, a willingness to listen, and a passion for ensuring every Red River Métis citizen in the Interlake feels valued, represented, and heard.



Keith Ginther

### Keith Ginther

1. I believe that our citizens deserve clear and open transparency across all areas of governance. This is essential to building a shared trust and ensuring we are moving forward together with a unified vision.

To achieve this, we must be willing to engage in honest and sometimes difficult discussions at the cabinet level. These conversations will allow us to present information to our citizens in a timely, understandable, and respectful manner.

2. I would ensure that I

## > ELECTION, FROM PG. 10

am accessible to constituents in person and through all available forms of communication. In our rural communities, effective communication requires using a variety of platforms and methods to reach everyone.

It is then our responsibility to bring those concerns forward to Cabinet and advocate strongly on behalf of our region, ensuring that the voices of our communities are heard and that their priorities remain at the forefront of decision-making.

3. I strongly believe it is time for change. We need fresh ideas, new energy, and a renewed perspective while continuing to build on the many successes already achieved by the MMF. There are excellent programs and initiatives that should remain in place and continue to grow. However, it is important that grassroots citizens have a stronger voice in shaping our future. By combining community input with the wisdom and guidance of our Elders, we can build a stronger and more

ensuring equitable access to healthcare, housing, education, and employment opportunities. If elected, I would advocate for continued and increased investment in community services, support partnerships that improve access to these essential programs, and work to ensure Métis voices are represented in decision-making. Strong communication, accountability, and engagement with citizens would guide my approach to addressing these priorities.

2. I would ensure citizens' voices are heard by being accessible, responsive, and actively engaged with the community. This includes holding regular meetings, attending local events, seeking input from Elders, youth, and families, and maintaining open communication channels. I would bring local concerns and priorities to the Manitoba Métis Federation, provide regular updates on decisions and initiatives, and advocate for solutions that reflect our region's needs.

3. I am seeking elected office to give back to my community and ensure local voices are represented in decisions that affect Red River Métis citizens. Through my experience in community involvement, leadership, and advocacy, I have developed strong communication, problem-solving, and organizational skills. I understand the challenges facing rural communities and would bring a practical, collaborative approach focused on transparency, accountability, and achieving positive outcomes for citizens.



Clint Webb

united Métis Nation.

Clint Webb

1. One of the most important issues facing Red River Métis citizens today is en-

## > ARBORG WATER, FROM PG. 8

and commercial development by ensuring the community has dependable infrastructure in place to support growth.

Had the work not proceeded, the town would have faced increasing risks related to aging infrastructure, rising repair costs and the possibility of service disruptions, Stansell said.

Provincial officials said investments in water and wastewater infrastructure are intended to improve system reliability, support community development and ensure long-term access to safe drinking water throughout rural Manitoba.

According to a provincial spokesperson, projects funded through the Manitoba Water Services Board are evaluated using criteria aligned with Manitoba's Water Management Strategy. Considerations include protecting public health and the environment, addressing regulatory requirements, enhancing climate resilience, supporting economic development, promoting water conservation, incorporating innovative technologies and engaging Indigenous communities and stakeholders.

The spokesperson noted the Manitoba Water Services Board received 375 project applications from 101 municipalities and water co-operatives in 2026, representing an estimated \$1.56 billion in infrastructure needs across the province, excluding Winnipeg.

Despite the demand, the board delivers approximately \$100 million annually in municipal water and wastewater infrastructure projects through a combination of federal, provincial and municipal funding.

Arborg was one of four completed projects highlighted in the province's latest announcement. Other projects receiving support included sewer and water renewals in Emerson, water and sewer upgrades in Melita, and a rural water pipeline extension in the Rural Municipality of St. François Xavier.

The province contributed \$4.3 million toward the four projects, which together are valued at more than \$8.4 million.

The Manitoba government said it will continue working with municipalities to modernize essential infrastructure with a focus on long-term sustainability, public safety and economic resilience.

### OTHER ARBORG COUNCIL

#### HIGHLIGHTS

Council's May 13 meeting also featured discussion on several infrastructure, recreation and community development initiatives:

- **Water treatment plant upgrades:** Council is advancing plans for a filtration system upgrade at the town's water treatment plant. The project was identified through a 2021 water and sewer system assessment and upgrading study, which found the current iron filtration system lacks the capacity to

meet peak water demands and accommodate future growth. The project is estimated to cost approximately \$1.5 million, with the town seeking provincial infrastructure funding to offset expenses.

- **Arena ice plant replacement:** Council is supporting the replacement of the aging ice plant at the Arborg and District Arena. The project, estimated at approximately \$800,000, has been identified as a priority by the Arborg-Bifrost Recreation Governance Committee following concerns about the reliability of the existing system. Costs are expected to be shared equally between the Town of Arborg and the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton, with both municipalities pursuing grant funding opportunities.

- **Future recreation lands:** Work continues to identify land for future recreation development near Arborg. The initiative is being undertaken through the regional recreation governance model and is tied to the planned personal care home project, which will occupy land currently used for recreation. The proposed site would support the future Arborg-Bifrost Outdoor Sports Complex and other outdoor recreation amenities.

- **Main Street improvements:** Council discussed the creation of a committee involving councillors, town staff and local business owners to help guide a Main Street Sidewalk Study. The review will focus on pedestrian safety, accessibility, connectivity and downtown beautification while supporting local businesses.

- **Personal care home project:** Council continues to participate in discussions regarding the proposed 59-bed personal care home for the region. Town officials say the facility would provide long-term care closer to home for local residents while creating an estimated 40 health-care positions and supporting economic growth in the region.

- **Street Festival support:** Council approved the closure of Main Street between River Road and Second Avenue for the Arborg Street Festival on Aug. 8 and granted a one-time exemption from the town's noise control bylaw. Town officials noted community events such as the festival help drive tourism, support local businesses and foster community pride.

- **Municipal policy update:** Council recently repealed its 1987 Private Crossings and Drainage Ditches By-law and replaced it with a modernized policy that includes updated engineering standards, clearer application requirements, improved drainage protections and greater transparency for residents seeking driveway access or culvert approvals.

## > REGGIE LEACH MUSEUM, FROM PG. 9

will hold open houses on Saturday and Sunday.

Visitors can step back in time to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The two-storey frame home was built in 1900 and is one of the oldest surviving residences in the area. Icelanders who arrived in the New Iceland colony in 1876 built the house, and subsequent generations of the family lived there. The house was named after the residents' birthplace in northern Iceland. Situated close to the Icelandic River, the home became a hospitality hub for travellers passing through town.

Replenished energy is a must after two days of non-stop enjoyment, which is why Sunday begins with a pancake breakfast hosted by Riverton Daycare, followed by a church service.

At noon, the Riverton Elks will serve fish burgers and coleslaw at the heritage centre. Kids can get airborne in a bouncy house, while adults can check out classic cars such as Mustangs, Chargers, Corvettes, Camaros and convertibles at the Riverton Co-op car show. They might also take home a prize during the Bifrost-Riverton Senior Resource's Merchandise Bingo at Centennial Park.

For more information about the July 3-5 events, visit Riverton Reunion Days on Facebook.

# East Interlake escapes worst of historic storm

By Patricia Barrett

Although Stonewall and the RM of Rockwood were badly hit with overland flooding that damaged homes and businesses and washed out roads on the night of June 9–10, communities in the eastern half of the Interlake dodged the worst of the storm.

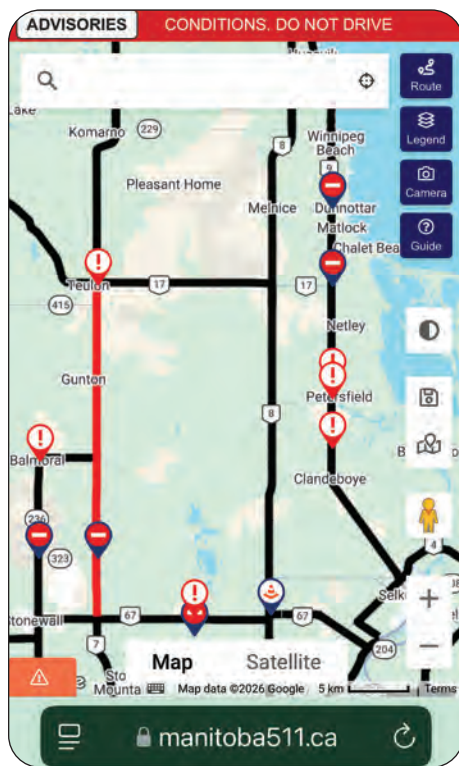
An unstable weather system moved north into the Red River Valley from the U.S., unleashing torrential downpours, high winds, hail and tornadoes that were confirmed in southern Manitoba, including near Ste. Anne and Dufrost.

Although the east Interlake was left, overall, relatively unscathed, some communities such as Winnipeg Beach and Dunnottar were impacted by overland flooding that inundated properties, washed out roads and closed Highway 9 in at least three locations, including a long stretch between Highway 17 and PR 225. Highway 17 itself (the gravel portion) between highways 8 and 9 was closed.

Municipal emergency coordinator Don Emes, who oversees the RM of Gimli, the RM of Armstrong and the Town of Winnipeg Beach, said he sympathizes with the people who are suffering in Stonewall. They “took the hit” in the Interlake because of the way the storm tracked.

But there were no major consequences as a result of the storm in Gimli and Armstrong.

“In Armstrong there was lots of capacity in the marshes to soak up and hold water. And there have been improvements done on some of the drains over the past years, so the water is moving as it should,” said Emes last Thursday. “This was a bad situation and it was widespread in locations. There were hotspots here and hotspots there, but everybody got water.”



MANITOBA 511 (JUNE 11)

The storm washed out, flooded and closed portions of east Interlake highways including Highway 9 and Highway 17 (gravel portion). On the west side, Highway 7 was impassable between Stonewall and Teulon.

Winnipeg Beach and Dunnottar, on the other hand, experienced some flooding and infrastructure damages. “Winnipeg Beach lost a lift station and they have some issues with their lagoon. But they’re working on it,” said Emes. “And Dunnottar had some flooding.”

Emes said all that water will now have to make its way along its normal course eastwards through drains and ditches and empty into Lake Winnipeg.

RM of Armstrong CAO Colleen Mayer confirmed the municipality was not greatly impacted by the storm.

“We did have one road (15E between 103 and



EXPRESS FACEBOOK PHOTOS

People posted photos of overland flooding in the east part of the Interlake after the storm of June 9-10.

104) that was affected with some water running over it, but that has been addressed by our public works department,” said Mayer. “We will continue to monitor all roads and conditions as more rain is expected.”

Gimli had water flowing over roads and some plunged culverts, but the impacts from the storm were minor.

“The RM of Gimli experienced only minor impacts from the recent weather,” said RM spokesperson Christine Payne last Friday. “There were a few instances of water flowing over roads, but no washouts were reported. Some culverts were temporarily plugged by debris, and there were a couple of trees downed along with minor branch damage due to wind. Overall, impacts were limited and manageable.”

Winnipeg Beach CAO Jodi Mitchell

said last Friday the town will have to repair washouts on roads and driveways and repair lift-station pumps. In terms of the number of residents and businesses affected by the flooding, the town doesn’t yet have an estimate as residents and business owners have been assessing their own properties.

At least six driveways are “completely impassable.”

In a June 11 notice on its website, the town said the lagoon took on a significant volume of water and is currently operating at the higher end of its normal operating range, but levels remain “acceptable at this time.”

Mitchell said they could request from the province an emergency re-

Continued on page 11



A Winnipeg Beach resident decided to have a morning coffee and enjoyed his “new” lakefront property while trying his luck fishing.



Highway 9 at Matlock as well as Pike Road is washed out.



Southbound on Gimli Road in Matlock at Bubbling Well Rd. This hole is 2 feet deep.

## > HISTORIC FLOOD, FROM PG. 10

lease.

"We are a few days away from our regularly scheduled release. However, if it appears to be more emergent, we will request an emergency release," said Mitchell.

She added that they're continuing to monitor the lagoon and work on repairs to the lift station pump.

"Pump trucks are no longer needed at this point as one pump is back operating and handling water volumes," she said. "We will continue to monitor the situation. Residents have been advised to take pictures and keep an inventory for insurance purposes."

The Village of Dunnottar, which is made up of the communities of Matlock, Whytefold and Ponemah, experienced heavy rainfall during the event last Tuesday.

CAO Sarah Palson said the rain hit all three communities, but Matlock was the most severely affected.

"Many properties and roadways were under anywhere from 6 to 18 inches of water. As the Village is the last drainage for all water coming from the west, the water was coming in so quickly and in such large volumes, we were very limited in where we could set up pumps and where we could pump the water to have an effect," said Palson on June 11. "We have been able to set up pumps today, however there is still a significant amount of water crossing over Highway 9 and entering ... the Village. We are actively working to mitigate the effects of the incoming water to our residents."

Residents whose properties were flooding sent concerns to the village office starting at about 3:30 a.m. on Wednesday morning, she said. Some property owners had water entering their crawlspaces.

Although major routes were closed, the provincial government stepped in quickly to help Dunnottar.

"A section of Gimli Road, between Whytefold Road and Matlock, was closed for a portion of Wednesday throughout the day due to a washed-out section of this highway. Thanks to the quick action taken by the Province of Manitoba, they were able to perform a temporary fix and allow traffic to access the roadway once again,"

said Palson. "Due to overland flooding and additional traffic on alternate routes, we did need to close another road within the municipality to ensure the integrity of the road was not compromised."

Palson said the regional coordinator of the provincial Emergency Measures Organization came to the administration office to "check in and offer supports as needed."

"We are hopeful that the province will announce a Disaster Financial Assistance program in response to this weather event," said Palson.

Premier Wab Kinew did, in fact, announce province-wide disaster financial assistance for flood damages later that Thursday as he toured Stonewall and Balmoral.

Stonewall received an unprecedented 255 millimetres of rain, and Highway 7 between Stonewall and Teulon was closed.

The storm caused sewage discharges into the Assiniboine and Red rivers in Winnipeg from pumping stations in Winnipeg, as well as discharges from Winnipeg's combined sewer overflows (CSOs).

A spokesperson for the City of Winnipeg told the Express it's unknown how much raw sewage entered the two rivers from CSOs.

"We do not have volume data to report on CSOs as they happen," said communications coordinator Lisa Marquardson last Friday. "We only post our CSO volumes annually."

Combined sewers are shown on a map provided by the city. It notes when an overflow is happening, when it started and when it ended. But the information from the June 9-10 storm is no longer available on the map as "too much time has passed," she added.

Raw sewage discharges from city pumping stations are available as the city is mandated to report them on its Reports on Untreated Sewage webpage.

It shows about 8.72 million litres of sewage entered the river system between June 9 and 10. The discharges were caused by hours-long power failures.

All that sewage flows north into Lake Winnipeg.



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# Gimli makes traffic improvements, creates overflow parking

By Patricia Barrett

RM of Gimli council has implemented a series of temporary parking and traffic improvements in the beach area and downtown core to enhance safety and accessibility during the busy summer tourist season.

Visually impactful enhancements include more visible crosswalks along Centre Street and painted curbs on Centre Street, First Avenue and Seventh Avenue to indicate where parking is permitted. The RM also created a permanent four-way stop at First Avenue and Amisk Drive.

Overflow parking along Second Avenue between Goldfield Drive and Barney Thomas Drive is available to the public, according to an accompanying map. The parking area fronts Dr. George Johnson School and adjacent green space.

The one-way lane along Gimli Beach includes three loading and unloading zones, along with parking near the north end of the beach at Barney Thomas Drive.

The changes were informed by a parking and mobility survey in which more than 260 residents provided the municipality with insight into where adjustments were needed.

“At a high level, the survey confirmed strong support for improving pedestrian safety, with crosswalks, traffic control and clearer street design rated positively; ongoing parking challenges during peak resort season, particularly around space availability and congestion; and interest in maintaining some seasonal measures while refining others to better balance access, safety and neighbourhood

impacts,” states a post on the RM’s website.

The seasonal parking and traffic changes are in effect from June 1 to Sept. 30.

Other news:

An application for a home-based business in the Pelican Beach neighbourhood was withdrawn before it went to a public hearing.

The business owner planned to sell and repair electric vehicles such as e-bikes, e-scooters and three- and four-wheeled mobility devices commonly used by seniors. The RM posted several letters of objection and support for the proposed business on its website.

“The applicant has withdrawn the conditional use application for the proposed home occupation (sale and repair of e-vehicles) in the Pelican Beach area. As a result, council did not consider or approve the application,” said council spokesperson Christine Payne.

When asked whether council would consider e-bike or scooter bylaws — concerns were raised a year ago about electric vehicles on Gimli sidewalks and roads — Payne said the RM is “not actively considering a bylaw specific to e-bikes or scooters” at this time.

Chris Stienke, the RM’s bylaw officer, issued a report for May indicating a focus on unsightly properties, parking violations, long-grass violations, short-term rental investigations, business licensing compliance, and noise- and fire-related complaints.

Thirty-one incidents were investigated, with parking complaints topping the list, followed by unsightly property complaints.



RM OF GIMLI

The Gimli Community Development Corporation’s board meeting minutes from March 23 provided little information on what the CDC is working on. The board reviewed and signed annual resolutions and held in-camera discussions.

The board consists of Kurt Reichert, Thora Palson, Kelly Cosgrove and Cheryl Buhler, recorder.

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# Chatfield Exchange is open and working with RM of Armstrong to resolve parking, trespassing

By Patricia Barrett

Art lovers and people who enjoy browsing for vintage and distinctive items were undoubtedly rejoicing after learning the Chatfield Exchange had not shut down, despite a social media post announcing its closure.

The Chatfield Exchange was told by staff at the RM of Armstrong a few weeks ago that it had to close, but that directive stemmed from a misunderstanding, and the municipality's CAO stepped in to address the situation, said Exchange owner Anthony Nelson.

Nelson, an artist from the Camp Morton area, converted Chatfield's old pool hall into an eclectic gallery and thrift store.

Stepping through the front door is a visual feast that transports visitors to another world. The Exchange has become a tourist magnet, renowned for its decor and art as well as its collectibles, clothing and other items. Visitors from across the region and beyond make the trek to Chatfield. The gallery showcases Nelson's art, including paintings and installations that spark conversation.

The Exchange posted a notice June 4 on its Facebook page saying the RM of Armstrong had "asked us to cease

all operations" after complaints were made by residents in Chatfield. Because the Exchange was preparing to open the following day, it asked its online followers to spread the news of the closure so visitors would not make an unnecessary trip to Chatfield.

Nelson told the *Express* the RM had sent him a note asking him to contact the municipality. He drove to the administration office in Inwood, where an employee told him he would "need to cease all operations until at least June 23 when council would have the opportunity at their meeting to approve the business."

"So when I posted publicly saying we were shut down, I was basing my information on what I had been told by the RM office. I had to make a public declaration as we were to be open the next morning and our customers drive out from all over Manitoba and I didn't want anyone to needlessly make the long drive to Chatfield," said Nelson by email. "Later that day I was contacted by the chief administrative officer and she relayed that the employee misunderstood the situation and that was not the case that we needed to cease operation."



EXPRESS PHOTO BY ANTHONY NELSON

The Chatfield Exchange on PR 419 is a one-of-a-kind art gallery and store, drawing customers from across the province. Artist Anthony Nelson lovingly restored the former pool hall.

Nelson said there were complaints about parking, or rather a shortage of parking at the Exchange. People

would sometimes park on the highway in front of the building when it

Continued on page 23

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# C.T. Physiotherapy celebrates 10 years of serving West Interlake communities

By Lana Meier

What started as a one-day-a-week venture with little more than determination and a dream has grown into a thriving rural health-care business serving communities across Manitoba's West Interlake.

C.T. Physiotherapy will celebrate its 10th anniversary on June 25, marking a decade of providing physiotherapy services to residents in Ashern, Lundar and surrounding communities.

Owner and lead physiotherapist Caitlin Milljour said opening her own clinic had always been a personal goal, even though she had limited business experience when she first started.

"I was born and raised in Winnipeg, and I had always wanted to own my own clinic," said Milljour. "I found a room to rent and started coming to Ashern on Saturdays while working full time in Winnipeg. I only knew one person in the area and I had no business experience, but I figured out how to run a business as the years passed."

As demand for physiotherapy services continued to grow, Milljour was eventually able to leave her Winnipeg position and focus on the clinic full time.

The growth of the business also led to a personal move. In 2017, Milljour and her husband, Jon, purchased a home in Eriksdale. A year later, they bought the building at 29 Main St. in Ashern, allowing the clinic to expand its services and establish a permanent home.

Today, C.T. Physiotherapy offers a wide range of services, including physiotherapy, acupuncture, orthotics and direct billing to most insurance providers. The clinic serves patients from communities throughout the region, including Ashern, Eriksdale, Arborg, Fisher Branch, Moosehorn, Hilbre, Lundar, Manitoba Narrows and beyond. Some clients travel from as far north as Grand Rapids to access treatment.

For Milljour, one of the most rewarding aspects of operating a rural clinic is ensuring residents can receive quality care close to home.

"It is important to provide these services locally so people don't have to travel all the way into the city," she said. "We want people to focus on their recovery, healing and getting their lives back."

The business has continued to evolve over the



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

C.T. Physiotherapy is celebrating its 10th anniversary on June 25. Pictured at the Ashern clinic are (from left) Baljeet Bangar, physiotherapy exam candidate; Caitlin Milljour, owner and lead physiotherapist; and Meghan DeFoort, office administrator.

years. In 2023, the Ashern clinic doubled in size and a satellite location was opened in Lundar, further improving access to care for area residents.

C.T. Physiotherapy has also embraced technology through its Digital Physio program, which allows clients to receive treatment remotely. The service has proven particularly beneficial for residents of remote communities, as well as those working rotational schedules who may not always be able to attend appointments in person.

Looking ahead, Milljour hopes to continue expanding the clinic's services and reach throughout rural Manitoba, including growing access to pelvic floor physiotherapy and exploring opportunities to expand clinic services and locations in rural communities. While she is proud of the clinic's growth, Milljour credits much of its success to the people who have supported her along the way.

"We have an amazing full-time office admin-

istrator, Meghan DeFoort, who has been with the clinic for more than five years," she said. "She keeps all of the operations moving smoothly and our patients love her."

Milljour also praised physiotherapy exam candidate Baljeet Bangar for helping meet the growing demand for services.

"None of this would be possible without their hard work," she said.

She also reserved special recognition for her husband, Jon.

"He took the plunge to move to a rural community and has been my biggest support," said Milljour. "He believed in me before I believed in myself. I wouldn't be where I am without him."

As she reflects on the past decade, Milljour said the relationships she has built throughout the West Interlake have made the journey worthwhile.

"I am so grateful for the support and trust of the community over the last decade. I never would have imagined the relationships I would build. Coming to work doesn't feel like work when patients feel like friends and family," she said.

"The community of West Interlake is home, and I will never leave country life."

C.T. Physiotherapy's Ashern clinic is located at 29 Main St. and is open Monday through Friday. The Lundar clinic, located at 1 Daisy Lane, operates on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.



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# Furgala reflects on 35-year career at Riverton Collegiate

By E. Antonio

As the school year comes to a close, so do the careers of many Evergreen School Division (ESD) staff members. Each has spent years dedicated to improving the lives of students, including Agnes Furgala, who is retiring after 35 years at Riverton Collegiate.

Furgala was a familiar face that students and staff could expect to see smiling day after day. As the school librarian, educational assistant, student liaison and breakfast and lunch program co-ordinator, she always looked forward to coming to work.

“I have always liked working with kids, and when I went to the high school, I thought it would be harder since they were older,” she recalled. “But honest to God, I just love them — I will miss working with them very much.”

Furgala first worked as an educational assistant in Grand Rapids before moving to the Riverton area. She remembers her first year as challenging, but over time she became more comfortable and quickly fell in love with her role.

About five years after joining Evergreen School Division, she became Riverton Collegiate’s librarian — something she said was, and continues to be, a learning process as she learned to use the cataloguing system.

About 13 years ago, she started the breakfast program at the school. She was responsible for purchasing ingredients, equipment and supplies, preparing meals and serving students. She said the position was easily the highlight of her career.

“Students would line up at the end of the hallway as soon as the bell went,” she said. “They were always so happy to be fed, and when I saw they were happy, it made me happy.”

She explained the breakfast program started with cereal and toast but even-

tually evolved into a well-loved daily menu featuring items such as French toast, sausage and pancakes, grilled cheese, waffles, as well as cereal and toast.

Continued on page 21



Agnes Furgala

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# Your FARM



## Lundar youth takes leadership role in Canadian Shorthorn community

Carman event to showcase youth, leadership and Shorthorn cattle

By E. Antonio

A young Lundar cattle producer is helping shape the future of Manitoba's Shorthorn industry after being named Manitoba director with the Canadian Junior Shorthorn Association (CJSA).

Sigga Vigfusson, 18, said taking on a leadership role was important to her because it provides an opportunity to give back to the organization.

Her term as Manitoba director will last until she ages out of the junior association at 21. Vigfusson said she submitted an application for the role and was later welcomed onto the board.

"Being one of the few Manitoba junior Shorthorn members made me an ideal candidate," she said.

She comes from a long line of cattle farmers, and her family's farm has

around 150 head, primarily commercial cows. She is also finishing her first year of animal science technology, majoring in beef science, at Lakeland College.

**"MEMBERS GAIN A WIDE RANGE OF SKILLS, INCLUDING LEADERSHIP, PUBLIC SPEAKING, TEAMWORK, RESPONSIBILITY AND A STRONG WORK ETHIC,"**

"Within our herd, we have always had commercial Shorthorn influence, but in 2023 I purchased my first purebred heifer from Ray and Susan Armbruster of Birdtail Shorthorns," she said. "I first got involved with the Canadian Junior Shorthorn Association through showing cattle and attending junior events, where I quickly found a strong and supportive community."

Vigfusson has been showing cattle from a young age and has been an active 4-H member since she was six, stepping into her first show ring at age three.

"The experiences I have gained over the years have really shaped who I



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Lundar's Sigga Vigfusson is serving as the Manitoba director for the Canadian Junior Shorthorn Association.

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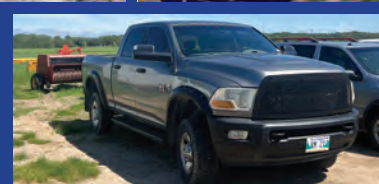
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am today," she added.

As Manitoba director, her role is to represent and support junior Manitoba members, help organize CJSA events and contribute to growing the organization. She said she takes pride in the opportunity and hopes to make a meaningful impact — both within the junior Shorthorn community and personally.

While Manitoba's junior Shorthorn membership numbers are relatively small, Vigfusson said the province has a strong reputation within the industry.

"While the number of junior Shorthorn members in Manitoba is small, our cattle quality and community make up for it," she said.

She also believes the Interlake region has a solid Shorthorn presence.

"I would say so, yes," she said. "At

# Your FARM



## > LEADERSHIP ROLE, FROM PG. 18

the auction marts in the fall, you'll always see a few Shorthorn cross cattle."

Although she does not know the exact number of local youth involved in the breed, Vigfusson said there are several young producers across the Interlake participating in Shorthorn programs and events.

"Through the CJSA, I have gained confidence, leadership skills and the ability to connect with people from across the country," she said. "It has helped me grow not just as a cattle producer, but as a person. The CJSA has also given me the opportunity to learn from experienced breeders, which provides valuable insight into how the industry has evolved and where it is heading."

The CJSA supports young Shorthorn farmers by developing showmanship skills, leadership abilities and networking opportunities within the agriculture industry. Throughout the year, members have access to events, workshops, educational op-

portunities and scholarships. Membership is open to Canadians under the age of 21.

"Members gain a wide range of skills, including leadership, public speaking, teamwork, responsibility and a strong work ethic," Vigfusson added. "These are all skills that carry far beyond agriculture and into future careers."

One upcoming CJSA event will take place in Carman on July 11: the Manitoba Summer Show. While Vigfusson is not directly involved in organizing the event, she said it will offer junior members opportunities to develop their skills through a full day of cattle shows, a welcoming atmosphere, and a chance to connect with others who share similar interests.

Organizers are expecting a strong turnout this year, and the event is open to the public.

Vigfusson said experiences like this are important for young farmers. "The local agricultural community

is very supportive, whether that's through mentorship, sponsorship or simply encouraging young people to get involved and grow within the industry," she said. "Local events make agriculture more accessible and give young people the opportunity to get involved without having to travel far. They also help strengthen community connections and promote both the

breed and the industry as a whole." She encourages youth to get involved, giving them the opportunity to learn, share and explore a future in Shorthorn cattle.

"Without young people, the future of the breed and the industry would not be possible," she added. "Their passion and ideas help keep agriculture moving forward."

**"THESE ARE ALL SKILLS THAT CARRY FAR BEYOND AGRICULTURE AND INTO FUTURE CAREERS."**

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# Age Friendly Dunnottar and Men's Sheds Manitoba team up for male mental health

By Patricia Barrett

Men who are interested in getting together with other men to socialize, make new friends and get involved in activities are invited to an information session in Dunnottar to learn about Men's Sheds Manitoba and how to form their own shed.

Age Friendly Dunnottar chair Althea Howard said her

group is hosting the session Saturday morning at the Ponemah Beach Central Art Centre building. Representatives from Men's Sheds Manitoba will visit the town to talk about men's sheds.

The idea behind men's sheds is to engage men who are experiencing social isolation. There is no age requirement to join a shed.

Howard said it is generally harder for men than it is for women to socialize, especially outside a work setting or after retirement when some men wonder how to spend their time. A men's shed group helps bridge that socialization gap.

That's why she reached out to Men's Sheds Manitoba to see whether the organization could help area men form a shed based out of Ponemah Beach Central, a former general store owned by the municipality and overseen by Age Friendly Dunnottar.

"A men's shed is such a great idea. We all have men in our lives and sometimes they have a hard time bridging that initial step into meeting people and finding a way to spend their time," said Howard. "When I learned about the sheds last fall, I thought this is such a good idea. So I got in touch with Vic Thiessen and other men involved in men's sheds. It's such a simple idea and it can be so impactful."

There is no pressure on Dunnottar men to form a shed on Saturday; the session will simply involve sharing information and gauging community interest, she said.

"Each shed is built by the men who are part of it. A shed looks really different in different communities based on what the men are interested in," said Howard. "They can range from something that looks like a book club to a shed that builds birdhouses."

Age Friendly Dunnottar is hoping it can facilitate the formation of a men's shed in the area in order to "be part of a positive change for men's mental health," she added.

In Manitoba, there are sheds in Winnipeg and rural communities. Men gather in community halls, church basements and other locations where they can regularly get together. Activities include hands-on projects such as woodworking, games and conversation, all united by a shared purpose — reducing isolation.

Vic Thiessen, who will be speaking at the Dunnottar information session, said men's sheds "meet men where they are," helping reduce isolation, which can affect their health.

Men's sheds are an important resource because aging, retirement and other major life changes can "significantly" reduce social engagement, and men are less likely to seek help or find com-

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 Phone: 204-997-9670 email: agefriendlydunnottar@gmail.com



For more information about Men's Sheds, visit our websites: menshedsmanitoba.ca or menshedsmanitoba.ca



### AGE FRIENDLY DUNNOTTAR

munity through formal programs.

The information session will cover what men's sheds are, the growing momentum of the movement in Canada, why they matter to Canadian men, "health by stealth" — the concept that sheds can support mental well-being — community impact, and how to start and run a local shed.

In the Interlake, Selkirk has a men's shed and another is in the process of being formed.

"There's a new shed in the start-up stage at Winnipeg Beach led by Paul Chorney," said Thiessen. "We plan to set up additional sheds in various communities throughout Manitoba as we find leaders and locations to meet in."

Thiessen shared information about the men's shed movement, which began in Australia in the late 1990s after a woman noticed her husband becoming disengaged after finding himself idle. From there, the movement grew to more than 2,500 sheds across a dozen countries, including Canada. Canada now has more than 175 men's sheds.

The National Institute on Aging's 2025 survey showed 57 per cent of older adults reported being lonely, while 55 per cent of men living alone were at a "high risk" of social isolation.

Although men's sheds originally focused on retired men, men of any age can join.

"Men's Sheds are open to all men of the community," said Thiessen. "The organization was initially started with a focus on men who have retired and are looking for community and purpose in their life. However, all men, regardless of age, can experience loneliness and have a need for other men in their lives."

Men's Sheds Manitoba's Dunnottar information session will be held Saturday, June 20 at 10:30 a.m. at Ponemah Beach Central Art Centre, 27 Central Ave. Doors open at 10:15 a.m.

For more information, contact Althea at Age Friendly Dunnottar at 204-997-9670 or email agefriendlydunnottar@gmail.com.

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# Gimli Huldufolk venture out from hiding to hold public picnic

## Huldufolk Room in old school's attic open to visitors until September

By Patricia Barrett

Gimli's "hidden people," the Huldufolk, typically live up to their name, but they decided to hold a picnic last Sunday afternoon for residents and visitors at the old schoolhouse, now known as the RM of Gimli administration building.

They invited special guest Kathleen Arnason, who has written several novels in the Gimli Huldufolk series. The books weave together fantasy and Icelandic folklore and feature Snaebjorn and Snorri, who hide in the old school's attic.

The RM of Gimli and its recreation staff helped the Gimli Huldufolk organize the event.

The picnic included free face painting courtesy of the Gimli Art Club, games such as cornhole, Jenga and hopscotch, as well as food.

Coun. Thora Palson said her daughter, niece and nephew were among those who enjoyed the afternoon party.

"The kids had a fun-filled, magical picnic with the Gimli Huldufolk," she said.

In Icelandic culture, the Huldufolk are supernatural beings, or elves, who typically live among rocks, cooled lava or knolls.

Snorri and Snaebjorn live in the schoolhouse attic until September each year. The RM then puts up a sign saying they have gone fishing in Iceland for the winter.

Other Huldufolk can be spotted — by those with exceptionally good eyesight — among the large lava-in-



Anna Palson poses with one of Gimli's beloved Huldufolk during a magical picnic hosted by the hidden people at the RM of Gimli administration building on June 14.

spired rocks at Viking Park near Gimli Harbour. The park was inspired by Icelandic folklore and pays homage to Iceland's stunning landscape.

The Huldufolk who live among the rocks in the park have erected a number of colourful houses. Although they did not adhere to all that bothersome human stuff called planning permission and building permits — it was one of those cases of build first, ask for forgiveness later — the municipality fully supports the small residential colony.

It is widely known that disturbing their homes can result in misfortune for the troublemaker. On the other hand, leaving the park's Huldufolk a small gift can earn a visitor a reward such as protection or good luck.

The attic, or Huldufolk Room, in the administration building is accessible by a spiral staircase.

It is open to visitors from May 12 to Sept. 21. If Snorri, Snaebjorn and the other Gimli Huldufolk cannot be coaxed out of hiding, visitors can leave them notes or drawings in a special chest.



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Gimli Mayor Kevin Chudd visited with author Kathleen Arnason (centre), her Gimli Huldufolk and Arnason's friend Moira Cohn at the old Gimli school (now the municipal administration building). The Huldufolk live in the attic of the building and hold an annual picnic for the community.



Facepainting courtesy of the Gimli Art Club.



Kids got to enjoy a number of game at the Huldufolk picnic.



Ben McPherson (left photo) and Ellie McPherson enjoyed meeting Gimli's Huldufolk.



### > 35-YEAR CAREER, FROM PG. 17

"The students really enjoyed it," she added.

Furgala also served as the student liaison for students from Berens River, Poplar River, Little Grand Rapids, Bloodvein, Pauingassi and Jackhead. She was responsible for placing students with house parents in Riverton and co-ordinating monthly meetings to ensure rules and regulations were being followed. Although it was a demanding job, she said she enjoyed helping students form connections.

Over the course of her career, she witnessed many changes, most of which involved the people she

worked with each day.

"There were a lot of new faces, but every one of them I got along with," she said. "There was not one time I was mad. I was happy every day."

In retirement, Furgala is looking forward to relaxing, although she acknowledges she may find it challenging to keep busy. She plans to continue working part-time at the Riverton Friendship Centre and expects she will continue seeing familiar faces from around town. Otherwise, she is looking forward to enjoying retirement as much as possible.

# Madeline's Closet opens flood relief centre in Balmoral

By Lana Meier

As communities across the Interlake continue to recover from last week's devastating flooding, Madeline's Closet has stepped in to provide emergency assistance to residents who have lost essential belongings and are struggling to rebuild their lives.

The charitable organization has opened an emergency response centre at the Balmoral Recreation Centre to serve residents affected by flooding throughout the region.

Since the flooding began, Madeline's Closet has responded to more than 200 emergency calls for assistance, said Shannon Dupont, who is coordinating the organization's flood relief efforts.

"We're worried about the people," said Dupont. "Municipalities are worried about infrastructure. We worry about the people. People need to know somebody cares about them."

The centre is operating Monday through Friday from noon to 7 p.m. and is open to anyone affected by flooding, regardless of which municipality they live in.

The flooding prompted states of emergency in six Interlake municipalities and communities, leaving many



EXPRESS PHOTO BY JO-ANNE PROCTER

Shannon Dupont, coordinator of the flood relief response at Madeline's Closet, stands inside the organization's emergency response centre at the Balmoral Recreation Centre. Pictured, left to right, are Margaret Watts, Shawna Christie, Shannon Dupont, Brenda Dykstra and Linda Barca.

## Community Support Service

### AA Arborg

Thursdays - 7:30 pm  
Arborg Support Centre  
327 Main Street  
Contact 204-376-5861

### AA Eriksdale

Eriksdale United Church building  
#7 Main Street, Eriksdale (side door)  
Meetings are Mondays  
at 6:30 p.m.

### AA Winnipeg Beach

Lady of the Lake RC Church  
Corner of Hwy. 9 and Lake Ave.,  
Winnipeg Beach  
Meetings are Saturdays  
between 7 and 8 p.m.  
Contact Ann J 204-389-3417

### Gimli Group AA

Bldg 18 Municipal Rd  
Industrial Park  
Fri & Sun Mtgs at 7:30 pm

### Al-Anon Gimli and Winnipeg Beach

Join us at 17B Loni Beach Road, next to New Horizon building... Gimli at 7:00 pm Wednesday evenings for an hour of support, strength, guidance and Hope. Contact 204-389-4777.  
All ages welcome.

### AA Riverton Group

12 Main St. at the  
Riverton Senior Centre  
Mondays 7:30 p.m.

residents facing significant losses.

Dupont said requests for help range from clothing and household items to basic toiletries such as toothbrushes, toothpaste and deodorant.

"Some people have lost everything," she said.

One encounter particularly underscored the need.

"I had a lady come in and she said, 'Can I please just have a toothbrush and some toothpaste? Our bedroom and bathroom were downstairs,'" Dupont recalled. "She said they couldn't even afford to go buy those things."

While Madeline's Closet has long provided emergency assistance to residents in need, Dupont said the scale of the flood response is unlike anything she has experienced in 18 years with the organization.

The organization has moved large quantities of inventory from its Inwood location to Balmoral, including the equivalent of three trailers, eight trucks and four SUVs filled with supplies.

Most of the items being distributed are new, although the organization is accepting donations of toiletries to help meet growing demand.

"Toiletries are going really, really

quickly," said Dupont. "I cleaned out three dollar stores on the weekend of deodorant, toothbrushes and toothpaste."

The organization is also seeking volunteers to help operate the centre. Current duties include sorting donations, stocking tables, assisting visitors and helping manage the facility.

At present, only five volunteers, including Dupont herself, are staffing the operation.

Compounding the challenge is the fact that many of Madeline's Closet volunteers are flood victims themselves.

"Out of my 30 volunteers, 25 have been affected by the flood," she said. "It's everything from a little bit of water to people who have lost everything."

One volunteer lost their home after floodwaters reached approximately eight feet inside the residence.

Dupont said the emotional toll is becoming increasingly evident as residents begin coping with the aftermath.

"The flood part is gone, but the aftermath won't be gone for quite a while," she said. "People have lost family mementos, photographs and

everything they've collected over a lifetime."

The Balmoral Recreation Centre was selected as the location because of its central position and because the facility was made available at no cost.

"The recreation centre has been super awesome. They donated the facility to us," said Dupont.

The emergency response centre is expected to remain open for at least several weeks, with operations being evaluated on a week-by-week basis.

Dupont said volunteers are urgently needed as demand for assistance continues to grow.

"We don't know if we're going to have two people come through the doors or 2,000," she said. "We're taking it one day at a time."

Anyone requiring assistance or interested in volunteering can contact Madeline's Closet by calling or texting Shannon at 204-861-8336 or visit the Balmoral Recreation Centre during operating hours.

"We need to get back to having a sense of community and helping each other," said Dupont. "Without that help, people are going to struggle."

# Perennial Paws offers personalized canine support for Interlake families

By E. Antonio

A new business is helping dog owners across the Interlake build stronger relationships with their pets through education, wellness support and personalized guidance.

Perennial Paws, founded by Katie Adam, officially opened in May and offers customized, in-home coaching and wellness services for dogs at every stage of life, from puppies and rescue animals to senior companions.

Adam brings more than a decade of experience in veterinary medicine and animal welfare to her new venture. Through years of working in clinics and caring for dogs with diverse backgrounds, she recognized a need for more individualized support for pet owners.

"My goal is to be a voice for these animals, advocating for their emotional well-being through gentle, fear-free methods, while empowering owners with the understanding and tailored guidance they need to truly thrive with their pets," she said.

Adam said many owners, particularly first-time dog owners, struggle with recognizing health concerns or addressing behavioural challenges.

Rather than judging owners for what they do not know, she wanted to create a welcoming environment where people feel comfortable seeking help and asking questions.

The business name reflects the lasting relationships she hopes to build with both pets and their families. Adam said perennial plants are known for their resilience and ability to thrive year after year, qualities she sees reflected in the bond between dogs and their owners.

Unlike traditional obedience programs that focus primarily on teaching commands, Adam's



approach examines the underlying reasons behind a dog's behaviour.

"Behavior is deeply connected to a dog's physical health, environment, stress levels and so much more," she explained. "By utilizing certified Fear Free rewards-based methods, we focus on changing how a dog feels about a situation. When you focus on building mutual trust, clear communication and emotional wellness, the reliable 'obedience' naturally follows."

Each client begins with a detailed consultation before receiving a personalized training and wellness plan.

Adam currently offers programs tailored to puppies, adult dogs, senior dogs and rescue dogs. She said ongoing support is a key part of the business, allowing owners to access guidance throughout their dog's life.

"Our dogs give us a lifetime of loyalty, and I wanted to create a business that honours them in return," she said. "I wanted to make sure Perennial Paws offers a little something to help every pet thrive as they grow."

For families welcoming rescue dogs, Adam emphasizes patience above all else.

"Patience is the greatest gift you can



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Katie Adam, owner and founder of the Interlake-based Perennial Paws, offers in-home coaching and wellness services for dogs of all ages.

offer a rescue pup," she said.

As summer approaches, Adam said many pet owners are seeking advice on seasonal concerns, including tick, flea and heartworm prevention, water safety, recall training and recognizing signs of heat-related illness.

The most rewarding part of her work, she said, comes from seeing both dogs and owners develop a deeper understanding of one another.

"There is nothing quite like the feeling when a concept suddenly clicks," she said. "Things start making sense, and you can visually see that deep connection and mutual understanding begin to form right in front of you."

Adam's passion for animal care is

also shaped by her own experiences raising and caring for dogs at different stages of life. Those experiences, she said, reinforce the importance of empathy, patience and realistic expectations.

Looking ahead, she hopes Perennial Paws becomes a trusted resource for dog owners throughout the Interlake.

"My biggest goal for Perennial Paws is to truly build on and strengthen our local community relationships," she said. "I don't want to just be a service provider that people call when they have a problem. I want Perennial Paws to be a trusted everyday resource for the entire Interlake region."

## > CHATFIELD EXCHANGE, FROM PG. 13

was very busy. Some visitors were also trespassing on private property containing historic buildings.

To help resolve the parking issue, the Chatfield Community Hall stepped up to offer its parking lot to people visiting the small community, which is located off Highway 17 between Poplarfield to the north and the Narcisse Snake Dens to the south.

"Parking became an issue during the Narcisse Snake Den season as there was a lot of crossover traffic and we had people parking along

the highway in front of our building," said Nelson. "We now have been graciously welcomed to use the Chatfield Community Hall's parking lot down the street for extra parking."

Nelson issued a public post last week thanking the Chatfield Community Hall for offering to share its parking lot. The post also clarified that not "all the people" of Chatfield took exception to the situation.

Nelson said he has since met with Armstrong's CAO to address the RM's concerns and those of a few

neighbours.

"We look forward to continue working with the RM in addressing all their concerns and hope to ease the tensions with those in town that have been affected by our business," he said.

CAO Colleen Mayer said the municipality supports local businesses and that there had been a misunderstanding regarding the closure.

"The RM of Armstrong has no interest in shutting down the Chatfield Exchange — there was a misunderstanding. The RM of Armstrong wants local businesses to thrive and prosper," said Mayer. "Of course, we must treat all busi-

nesses the same and we want permits where required. We all need to be compliant with the bylaws and will work with the owners to get there."

She said the RM has met with the Exchange owners and they are working together to resolve the concerns.

"We have met with the business owners this week to discuss concerns and will continue to work with them in the near future to address those concerns," said Mayer.

Visit the Chatfield Exchange on Facebook or Instagram for a glimpse of what the store has to offer.

# Riverdale Place Workshop opens doors to community

By Lana Meier

Friends, family members and community residents were invited to learn more about the work being done at Riverdale Place Workshop Inc. during a recent open house that featured live music, shopping opportunities and guided tours of the facility.

The open house gave visitors a chance to explore Riverdale Place Workshop, a supported workplace for individuals living with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Guests toured the workshop, including its recycling depot, while learning about the various programs and projects undertaken by participants.

Adding to the welcoming atmosphere was musical entertainment provided by Dani Caldiera and her husband, who encouraged guests to sing along and take part in the afternoon's festivities.

A highlight of the event was the promotion of the workshop's new "R" Store, an initiative designed to revive a former retail space that had fallen out of use. The letter "R" represents four key concepts that guide the project: Riverdale, Recycle, Reuse and Reduce. The store's primary objective is to recycle and repurpose materials and inventory from past projects while creating meaningful work opportunities for participants.

One example stems from Riverdale's former pallet repair contract with Diageo, which ended several years



ago. Rather than discarding the remaining pallet materials, participants now transform the wood into seasonal porch leaners, decorative signs and other handcrafted items. Participants assist with sanding, painting and finishing the products before they are offered for sale in the store.

The "R" Store also features houseplants that participants help pot and care for, as well as birdhouses and a variety of small wooden crafts.

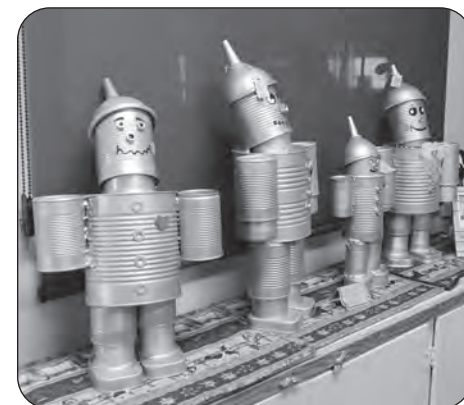
Organizers said the initiative not only promotes environmental sustainability through recycling and reuse but also showcases the skills, creativity and contributions of Riverdale Place Workshop participants.

The open house provided an opportunity for the community to connect with participants, learn about the organization's work and support its programs through purchases made at the store.



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY LANA MEIER

Community members joined in song as Dani Caldiera (centre) and her husband provided musical entertainment during Riverdale Place Workshop's open house.



Handcrafted wooden signs, porch leaners, birdhouses, houseplants and other creations made by Riverdale Place Workshop participants are displayed in the new "R" Store. The store promotes Riverdale's commitment to recycling, reusing and reducing waste while showcasing the skills and creativity of its participants.



Riverdale Place Workshop participants sort and process recyclable materials at the facility's recycling depot. The depot is one of the workshop's key operations, providing meaningful employment opportunities while helping divert recyclable materials from local landfills.



# sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

## Gimli's Kovacs tackles 100-km 'runner's nightmare' for fifth-place finish

By Kieran Reimer

Trails of Toba's Suffer on Centennial is the ultimate test for ultramarathon runners.

The race features a 100-kilometre course with 2,200 metres of elevation gain through the rocky Canadian Shield trails of Whiteshell Provincial Park, including the daunting final kilometres of the Top of the World Trail.

On Saturday, May 23, the annual "runner's nightmare" returned to southeastern Manitoba, where hundreds of participants competed in the 100-km, 100-km relay, 50-km, 25-km and eight-km events. Some runners took up to 18 hours to complete their races.

Gimli's Dallas Kovacs was among them, completing the 100-km run in 11:10:04 to finish fifth among men and sixth overall.

"If you never try these things that seem impossible or uncomfortable, you'll never know what you're capable of. That's the reason I ran my first half marathon, and why I keep pushing for more," said the 31-year-old.

Kovacs has been running long distances for the past decade. He started with the Manitoba Marathon half marathon as a birthday challenge in June.

He later progressed to the full marathon and 50-km distances before tackling his first 100-km race at Suffer on Centennial.

Kovacs said he wasn't sure what time to target given it was his first attempt at the distance. He had seen

previous top finishers complete the race in the 10- to 11-hour range and decided to aim for a similar result.

On race day, he made sure he had the necessary supplies, including 30 energy gels that he consumed throughout the race and a jacket he shed within the first 25 kilometres.

Despite temperatures reaching only eight degrees Celsius, periods of rain and numerous blisters that developed within the first 20 kilometres, Kovacs accomplished what he set out to do.

"If I would have taken it a little bit easier and set my goal for finishing in 13 hours, then I would have never landed fifth place male or sixth overall," said Kovacs. "I just feel like push yourself and maybe something cool is going to happen and you'll land in the Top 10."

Though the race itself was longer than any distance he had previously completed, Kovacs said the training was the toughest part.

His regimen ranged from shorter runs to outings of up to 50 kilometres, helping him reach weekly training totals of 110 kilometres.

"I kept telling myself that if I could make it through the training, the race day was going to be easy," said Kovacs. "It was 110 kilometre weeks, early mornings, not going out on weekends, whatever, just missing out on a lot of things. You just push through that training block and you know that you're going to be better off for it. I tend to set my goals a little bit higher than I should, kind of knowing that it



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Dallas Kovacs of Gimli completed the grueling 100-kilometre Suffer on Centennial ultramarathon in Whiteshell Provincial Park on May 23, finishing fifth among men and sixth overall with a time of 11:10:04.

might not work out, but if I don't try, then you never really know."

Kovacs was one of several Interlake residents who took part in Suffer on Centennial.

Grosse Isle's Paige Procter also completed the 100-km race, finishing in 17:16:30 on the women's side.

Lundar's Mandy Gould competed in the women's 50-km event, while Stonewall-based triathlete Lee Stewart ran an 18-kilometre leg in the six-person relay.

Amy Martin and Tyler Andrade,

both of Stonewall, also served as pacers, guiding runners through various sections of the course while completing significant portions of the trail themselves.

Kovacs now has his sights set on the upcoming Manitoba Marathon, where he will run the full marathon.

The remainder of 2026 will also see him competing in the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba's five-kilometre race and the Epic East Gate 50-km event.

He said he is already back to training, including solo 50-kilometre runs.

## Storm FC unbeaten streak reaches three games with draw

By Kieran Reimer

Storm FC continued its climb up the Manitoba Major Soccer League Division 5 standings last week.

After earning a point in a 2-2 draw against East Kildonan United FC on Wednesday, Storm moved into a tie for second place.

The match was played less than 24 hours after heavy rainfall left many soccer pitches across Manitoba unplayable.

Despite a venue change, Storm FC and East Kildonan were able to complete their match at Buhler Recreation Park.

Shayne Kornelsen and Dylan Loewen scored for Storm FC, while Gurshan Singh Bhullar and Chashan Toor replied for East Kildonan.

The draw improved Storm FC's record to 3-2-1 and extended its unbeaten streak to three matches, with the club earning at least a point in each contest.

Storm then turned its attention to a lone match this week against Fratelli Di Calabria FC on Monday at Buhler Recreation Park.

Due to press deadlines, the result of Monday's match was unavailable at press time.

### UPCOMING GAME

• Tuesday, June 23 vs. Red River Rovers, 7:30 p.m., Buhler Recreation Park

To see more photos of your favourite Interlake Athletes

GO TO

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# get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



## Simple Lemon Butter Pearl Couscous

1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped

Prepare pearl couscous according to package directions, adding lemon juice to water.

In small pan, melt butter over medium heat. Add shallots and lemon zest. Cook 3 minutes. Stir pearl couscous into pan.

Divide pearl couscous into four bowls and top with parsley.

Prep time: 5 minutes  
Cook time: 10 minutes  
Servings: 4  
1 bag Success Pearl Couscous  
3 lemons, juice only, plus 1 teaspoon zest  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 small shallot, finely diced



## Peanut Butter Toast with Celery and Grapes

5-6 seedless red grapes, halved  
1-2 Dandy celery sticks, sliced diagonal  
1 tablespoon granola  
1 teaspoon maple syrup  
kale, mustard greens or arugula (optional)

Spread peanut butter evenly over surface of toasted bread.

Top with grapes and sliced celery.

Sprinkle with granola and drizzle with maple syrup. Top with kale, mustard greens or arugula, if desired.

Recipe courtesy of "Floating Kitchen" on behalf of Duda Farm Fresh Foods  
Prep time: 5 minutes  
Cook time: 2 minutes  
Servings: 2  
2-3 tablespoons creamy peanut butter  
2 slices cinnamon-raisin bread, toasted



## Dill Pickle Dip

1/4 teaspoon pepper  
crackers, for serving  
Dandy Celery Dippers, for serving  
Breadcrumb Topping:  
1 teaspoon butter  
3 tablespoons panko crumbs  
Allow cream cheese to soften about 20 minutes outside of refrigerator.

While cream cheese is softening, prepare breadcrumb topping. In pan over medium heat, stir butter and breadcrumbs until fully combined. Breadcrumbs will toast in 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat once toasted, as desired.

In bowl, mix softened cream cheese, 1/2 cup pickles, 1/4 cup celery, pickle juice, dill, salt and pepper until fully combined. Transfer to serving bowl.

Before serving, sprinkle dip with cooled, toasted breadcrumbs and additional pickles and celery. Serve with crackers and celery dippers.

Recipe courtesy of "Laughing Spatula" on behalf of Duda Farm Fresh Foods  
Prep time: 5 minutes  
Cook time: 5 minutes  
Servings: 6  
8 ounces cream cheese  
1/2 cup dill pickles, finely chopped, plus additional for garnish  
1/4 cup Dandy Celery, finely chopped, plus additional for garnish  
3 tablespoons pickle juice  
1 tablespoon fresh dill, chopped  
1/4 teaspoon salt

## How to motivate yourself during exercise

By Fitness Expert Julie Germaine

The battle never ends! You've motivated yourself to put on your runners and start your workout, but quickly feel your drive fading, or perhaps you are even tempted to call it an early day. Having the right mindset is important to achieving your fitness goals, and it can take practice to consistently click into "training mode."

Here are a few hacks to try next time you can relate to this scenario:

Take it one step at a time. Don't think ahead to what's next in your workout. Instead, stay in the moment and apply all your energy toward the next rep.

Know your why. You have a solid reason for being in this position, spending your valuable time engaging your body in movement. Remind yourself of that reason to help kickstart your motivation again.

Be happy with your efforts. Don't beat yourself up for having an off day. We all have them! Just like everything else in life, there will be ups and downs in your fitness journey, and those who stick with an active lifestyle long term learn to accept this fact. Keep doing your best in the current workout, even if your best today isn't what your best was last week.

Have a plan and stick to it. If you have a workout program you are following, you don't have to think about what you have the energy to do today or be tempted to only do two exercises before going to watch TV on the couch. Having a written plan that details how many sets, reps and rest periods are required will make it easier to push ahead.

Vibe check. Is your environment



Fitness Expert, Julie Germaine and daughter Amelia

a motivational one? Look at your space and think about ways to enhance it to help you stay in the mood to train. Music is often an easy way to boost the vibe and create a fun experience. Create a playlist that is going to pump you up and keep you going.

If you're not seeing the results you are after with your workouts, try these strategies to take your fitness to the next level.

Discuss your health goals or fitness struggles by scheduling a free online consultation at Calendly or email Julie directly at 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 of people worldwide improve their health since 2005.



## California Grape Rosemary Spritzers

24 whole Grapes from California  
2 quarts sparkling water  
1 1/2 cups sliced Grapes from California  
ice

Partially strip rosemary branches, leaving 3-4 inches of greenery. Skewer three grapes on each branch.

Pour water into large pitcher. Add sliced grapes and stir.

Fill eight glasses with ice and grape sparkling water. Garnish each drink with grape-rosemary skewer.

Servings: 8  
8 rosemary sprigs (about 6 inches long)

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## IN MEMORIAM

**Dubchak, Terry**  
February 14, 1957 – June 18, 1987  
Forever loved and remembered  
and sadly missed.  
-Mom and family

## BIRTHDAY



As we go through life, we aim for many bullseyes.  
Two are getting a driver's license and graduating high school.  
Wynter Robinson -Erlendson,  
Baba's family is very proud of you for achieving both in 2026.  
May you continue to fly straight like an arrow, stay true and keep hitting your target.

## MEMORIAL SERVICE

**Sophie Stanowski**  
September 13, 1935 – December 21, 2025  
The family of Sophie Stanowski invite family and friends to join us in remembering and celebrating the life of Sophie Stanowski.  
A memorial service will be held on: Saturday, June 20, 2026 1:00 p.m. at the Arborg Community Center.  
All who knew and loved Sophie are invite to attend the service.

## ANNIVERSARY

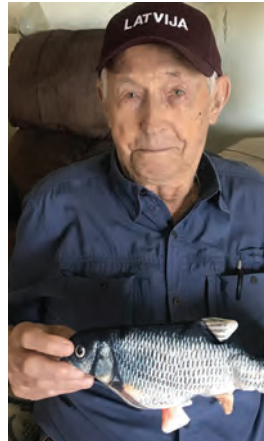


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## OBITUARY



### Elmar L. Chulka

It is with deep sadness that we announce the peaceful passing of Elmar L. Chulka, aged 102, on June 10, 2026 at Jubilee Lodge in Prince George, BC.

Left to mourn him are his son Arthur, daughter Sandra (Doug), grandson Keith (Rebecca), granddaughter Alanna (Brent), and great-granddaughters Sophie, Claire, Austyn, Ryley and Haisley. He also will be dearly missed by the Deme family - his brother-in-law Imants (Lidija), his nieces Karen (Ross) and Larisa (Chris) and great-nephews Ruben and Theo. Greatly missing him will be the Cepelis family - his nieces Dinah and Ilze (Mike), great-niece Nikola (Justin), nephew Jim (Jacinta) and great-nephew Quinn. He will also be missed by friends in Manitoba, especially in Gimli. He was predeceased by his wife Dzidra in 2022.

Elmar experienced a remarkable life, from his youth in Bauska, Latvia, to his 1938 solo journey at age 15 to Canada, to his ability to undertake trucking, mining, and farming for a living, and his long convalescence and recovery from a significant fall at work. His 36-year career with Winnipeg Hydro in Pointe du Bois, MB led to a lifestyle where he and Dzidra enjoyed many outdoor activities on the Winnipeg River.

Retirement included travels to Texas, and a move to Gimli where they made many friends. Elmar played a competitive game of cribbage right up to his last days. His retirement hobby of wood carving has provided us with many animal figurines that demonstrate his talent and fine motor skills.

After more than 71 years of marriage and Dzidra's passing, his life changed dramatically, but his "let's take it on" attitude did not. At age 101, he willingly left his charming life in Gimli to move to distant Prince George to be closer to his immediate family who welcomed him.

Elmar was so grateful to those friends and family who walked by his side throughout his long life, and ultimately, to the health personnel at UHNBC and the cheerful, caring staff at Jubilee Lodge in Prince George.

Donations in Elmar's memory can gratefully be made to the Alzheimer Society of Canada or the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.

## OBITUARY



### Kenneth "Kenny" Wayne Eyjolfson

Kenneth "Kenny" Wayne Eyjolfson suddenly passed away on May 27, 2026.

A service will held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 27, 2026 at the Riverton Community Cemetery. Following the service, a gathering will be held at the Riverton Curling Club on the second floor, 175 Reggie Leach Dr. in Riverton, MB.

*Your memory will live forever  
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# Classifieds Announcements



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## OBITUARY



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

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

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, June 20, 2026 at 2:30 p.m. in the Gibart Funeral Chapel, Gimli, Manitoba.

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

Tributes: [www.gilbartfuneralhome.com](http://www.gilbartfuneralhome.com)  
Gilbart Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.

Gilbart Funeral Home,  
Gimli in care of arrangements.



## OBITUARY



**Conrad Comeau**

Peacefully and surrounded by his family, Conrad Comeau passed away on June 12, 2026 at the age of 84 years.

He will be lovingly remembered by his wife Margaret of 59 years; sons, Dwayne (Paula) and Jason (Theresa); grandchildren, Carter (Carrigan) and Miya (Thor); Waylen (Alissa) and Shaelynn; great-grandchildren, Leddy and Liam. Also, his sister Genevieve and numerous brothers and sisters-in-law and their families, as well as numerous relatives and friends.

He was predeceased by parents Marie and Leger Comeau; sisters Theresa, Camilla, Delvina and their spouses; brothers Larry and Victor and their spouses.

He enjoyed his many summers at their trailer on Georgian Bay, especially boating and happy hour with his friends.

Conrad's last few weeks were spent in the Gimli Hospital and we're so grateful for the care and compassion he received from all.

A huge thank you to Gimli Cancer Care for their excellent care of Conrad since he started his treatment with them three years ago.

In keeping with his wishes, cremation has taken place and no formal service will be held.

Tributes: [www.gilbartfuneralhome.com](http://www.gilbartfuneralhome.com)

Gilbart Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.



## OBITUARY



**Edward Wiktor Krupnik**  
February 1, 1962 - June 5, 2026

It is with heavy hearts we announce the passing of Edward Krupnik after a valiant fight with cancer for over two years, at the age of 64.

He was predeceased by his father Dominik and brother Victor.

Ed will be overwhelming missed by his soulmate, Wanda Gosselin and the young lady whom he loved dearly and was so proud to be part of her life, Nevaeh (Chris).

Ed was born the middle child of five siblings to Dominik and Maria Krupnik. Ed dedicated a lot of time and energy over the years to the family farm but started in the aviation industry early in life, first working for OCA and then starting with Air Canada in March 1985. Ed took early retirement in July 2011 after the maintenance base in Winnipeg shut down. Ed chose to stay closer to home so he could

help his dad.

When a friend showed Ed the art of chainsaw carving, he fell in love with it. He could see things in the wood that most of us can't and he created many lovely pieces - many of which he gave away as gifts because above all, Ed had a kind heart and liked to give joy to those he loved and respected.

Ed also loved to travel and he especially enjoyed the East Coast (meticulously devouring the Lobster but never managing to get his moose burger while being there). Ed also had the love for music and took in many events and thoroughly enjoyed listening to Billy "practice". Most of all, Ed liked to visit with people (and it was even better if a "Kool-Aid" could be had - but never let him pour).

A trip to Princess Auto was never quick. He would grab a coffee and he always ran into someone he knew. Ed also had the love of the outdoors and he loved to hunt which included getting together with his buddies for deer hunting or taking a few days for Moose hunting. If invited, he never turned down a chance to go in the boat fishing.

A Celebration of Life was held on Monday, June 15, 2026 with interment following.

We will miss him dearly.

Friends and family are invited to visit Edward's memorial page at [www.interlakecremation.ca](http://www.interlakecremation.ca), where memories and condolences may be shared.

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Applicants:

- Willing to obtain certification in Small Systems Water Works Operator Certificate and Small Systems Wastewater Works Operator Certificate (can be done during training period).
- Must be 18 years of age or older, hold a valid driver's licence and have a vehicle, minimum grade 10 education.
- Strong mechanical skills a definite asset, aptitude for accuracy, and customer friendly attitude are desirable
- Willing to work as part of a team and may be called upon to help in other duties within the municipality.
- Friendly, team player, responsible, able to work unattended and a strong work ethic is expected.
- Blue Cross available

The Utility Operator will report to the Chief Administrative Officer and Public Works Supervisor.

Please submit resume, cover letter and 3 references. Position will remain open till filled.

Kelly Marykuca, CMMA  
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