

As the holidays draw near, I'd like to extend my heartfelt Season's Greetings. May your holidays be filled with warmth, love, and moments you will cherish with those closest to you.

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# THE EXPRESS

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WEEKLY NEWS

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EXPRESS PHOTO BY RAYME THOMSON  
Santa waves from his brightly lit float during the Gimli Christmas Parade on Dec. 6, delighting children bundled along the route.

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*Good Times FINANCING*

# This is for the birds: Christmas Bird Counts help document species, ecosystem threats

By Patricia Barrett

You might think that driving down back roads or tramping around in the bush during a bright, bracing Manitoba winter day while making ticks in a ledger is for the birds — and you'd be right.

The annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is coming up, and five Interlake areas are playing host to the census that sees volunteers eagerly hitting the roads or sitting sentry at their living room windows to count the different species (and numbers of each species) of bird they spot.

And there's no better time than now for those who want to become better acquainted with the feathery dinosaur descendants and give counting a go while enjoying the great outdoors — not to mention the satisfaction of contributing to data sets that scientists use to determine bird population trends and the impact of the climate crisis or habitat quality.

"The Christmas Bird Count is ideal if you want to get into learning about birds because there are fewer birds around in the winter than there are in the summer when we've got a few hundred," said Joanne Smith, who is the Hodgson CBC organizer, or compiler as the CBC head office calls their organizers. "Now is a good time to participate in a bird activity. And if people are not sure if they saw a hairy woodpecker or a downy woodpecker, we can talk about it and usually get a pretty accurate idea of what species they saw."

The Hodgson CBC was started in 2011, and Smith said it comprises a 24-kilometre circle that includes Fisher Branch and Fisherton to the west, plus a bit of the southern part of Peguis (using the road net-

work).

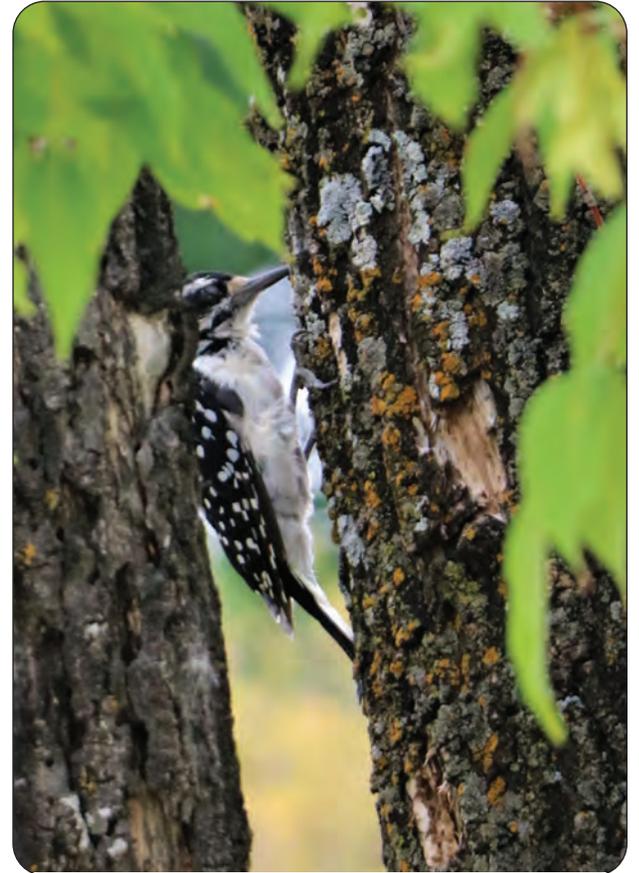
The CBC is a census of early-winter bird populations that takes place from Dec. 14 to Jan. 5. It's North America's longest running citizen-science project. Birds Canada oversees the Canadian program in partnership with the National Audubon Society. The data is entered into an ornithology database that's used by scientists to assess bird population trends and distribution.

The first Christmas Bird Count began in 1900 after American ornithologist Frank Chapman thought it might be better to start a tradition that helped preserve birds rather than carry on the tradition of shooting them for fun. The first official CBC in Manitoba took place in 1925.

There are two categories of bird census-takers: the field counters and the feeder counters. The field counters can either get out in the bush or drive down back roads and periodically stop to count birds. They can opt for or be assigned a specific area or a certain road within their CBC ambit. The feeder counters stay home and count birds that come into their yard, whether to a feeder or a tree.

So, what job is more exciting? The correct answer is both.

"They can both be exciting. I wouldn't say one is more exciting than the other. If you're driving the back roads, you could see unusual species. But you could also get unusual species showing up in your yard, too," said Smith. "Some people got a gray partridge in their yard, which we don't always see, or a bohemian waxwing [peach-coloured birds with sweeping black eye markings that resemble winged



EXPRESS FILE PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

A woodpecker is shown in Loni Beach in the north end of Gimli. Birds are a barometer of ecosystem health, and counting them every year during annual Christmas Bird Counts helps scientists understand changes to the environment such as habitat loss or the impact of pollution and the climate crisis.

Continued on page 5



## Evergreen Staff Spotlight

*Celebrating the People Who Make Our Schools Work*

### Meet Antonia Pakinggan-Illas – Educational Assistant & Library Clerk

For the past four years, Antonia Pakinggan-Illas has been a caring presence in Winnipeg Beach School, supporting students both as an Educational Assistant and as a Library Clerk. What began as "just a job" quickly grew into a calling, and year after year she reapplied until she earned her permanent role — because for Antonia, it was always about the children.

Her work goes far beyond day-to-day duties. "I'm not only responsible for my job tasks, but for supporting students academically, providing individual support, making them feel important, and setting a good example," she explains. In the library, Antonia makes storytime interactive: "I don't just read to them — I make sure everyone participates, they don't just listen, they interact, and I listen to them too."

For Antonia, the joy of this work comes from sharing in her students' journeys. "I am blessed and pleased and lucky to be there to share their laughter, tears, and overcoming challenges," she says. "Their success and fulfillment are my accomplishments."

What she loves most about Evergreen is its unwavering support for students. And what she wants the public to know is simple: "We are here to support the students and make sure they get the help they need."

Thank you, Antonia, for your dedication, your compassion, and the positive example you set every day for Evergreen students.

*Interviewed by trustee  
Amanda Mosher*





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# Gimli kicks off Christmas with lights and cheer



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY RAYME THOMSON

Lights twinkled, music played and families lined the streets as floats rolled through town for the RM of Gimli's annual Christmas Parade on Dec. 6. The community came out in full festive spirit, cheering, collecting candy and celebrating the official kickoff to a weekend of holiday events, Moonlight Madness and tree lighting at the harbour.



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# Dr. Jade Young returns to Interlake to open Prairie Sky Health & Wellness

By Lana Meier

When Dr. Jade Young walked into her new clinic for the first time as owner and physician, the moment represented more than the start of a business. It was a return to the place that raised her — and the beginning of a medical model she hopes will reshape rural care in the northern Interlake for years to come.

Young was born in Dauphin in 1993 and raised in Eriksdale, later moving to Lundar Collegiate for Grade 9 through 12 before graduating in 2011. Like many rural students, she left home to pursue higher education, completing a bachelor of science at the University of Manitoba and later earning her MD at the Max Rady College of Medicine in 2019. She finished



The Prairie Sky Health & Wellness logo was designed by Jade's sister Megan Parkes.

her residency through the Northern and Remote Family Medicine Program in 2021 — training built around the realities of practising where resources are thin but needs are great.

Her path since then has been any-



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Dr. Jade Young with her parents and siblings. From left to right: Megan Parkes, Tracy Parkes, Dr. Jade Young, Mark Parkes and Evan Parkes.

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thing but conventional. Instead of remaining in an urban centre, Young chose to work in remote First Nations communities through Ongomizwiwin Health Services (OHS), beginning immediately after graduation.

Since 2021 she has provided clinical care in Garden Hill and Red Sucker Lake, and recently added Cross Lake and Wassagamak to her rotation. She spends one week and one weekend per month in the north, also providing remote call coverage and serving as chief of staff for the Island Lakes communities — a leadership role requiring frequent off-site meetings and ongoing coordination with local

health teams.

At the same time, Young returned to the Interlake to practise in Eriksdale. Between 2021 and 2025 she worked across settings — clinic, hospital, emergency room, personal care homes and at Lake Manitoba First Nation. She describes those years as formative, demanding and deeply rewarding.

“I was fortunate to work with an amazing administrative team, skilled allied health and a supportive group of providers in Eriksdale,” she said. “I loved many aspects of my job and

Continued on page 8

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# Manitoba government provides funding for Winnipeg Beach Fire Department, Gimli Recreation Centre

By Patricia Barrett

The provincial government announced last week it's making over \$2 million in investments in five Interlake communities, including the Town of Winnipeg Beach and the RM of Gimli, to strengthen infrastructure and public safety.

The Town of Winnipeg Beach Fire Department will receive \$40,000 for fleet replacement and rapid response, and the RM of Gimli will receive \$1 million for its Gimli Recreation Centre campus plan and the renewal of Centennial Road and Autumnwood Drive.

Municipal and northern relations minister Glen Simard (NDP MLA for Brandon East) said the total investment [\$2,086,375] reflects the province's commitment to strengthening rural communities in the region.

"These projects will enhance public safety and improve essential local infrastructure that families and communities rely on every day," said Simard in a Dec. 3 provincial news release. "By working closely with municipali-

ties across the Interlake region, we're ensuring they have the tools they need to build a safer, more vibrant future for all Manitobans."

Town of Winnipeg Beach Fire Chief Dave Schellenberg said in a statement to the *Express* the funding will strengthen the department's water rescue program.

"This investment will significantly enhance the department's ability to protect the community by strengthening its water rescue program and providing faster, more efficient response to non-fire related emergencies such as medical incidents, shoreline rescues and other urgent calls where time is critical," said Schellenberg. "Our volunteers respond to a wide range of emergencies, and this grant allows us to reach people faster when every minute matters. We are grateful to the Province of Manitoba for supporting our growth and helping us continue to safeguard residents and visitors."

Winnipeg Beach Mayor Stan Potten and councillors Barry Hoel, Doug Jar-

vis and Larry Kisloski also thanked the province for its support, as well as the Winnipeg Beach Firefighters Association.

"This funding ensures our volunteer firefighters can respond faster and better protect residents and visitors," said council.

Gimli Mayor Kevin Chudd said the province's \$1 million investment is "significant" for the community.

"The funding for the recreation centre campus plan and essential infrastructure renewal will help us modernize critical assets, enhance safety, and support the recreational and transportation needs of our growing community," said Chudd in the provincial news release. "These improvements will benefit residents, businesses and visitors alike, and we're grateful for the province's continued partnership in building a strong and vibrant future for Gimli."

In addition to investing in Winnipeg Beach and Gimli, the province is providing the RM of Rockwood with \$784,875 for Phase 2 of the reconstruc-

tion of Propellant Plant Road (75N) Road 10E. The Town of Stonewall is receiving \$136,500 for climate and accessibility upgrades of Quarry Park. And the RM of Grahamdale is receiving \$125,000 for grounds expansion of the Faulkner Waste Disposal site.

Funding for all five projects will be distributed through the 2024-25 Manitoba Growth, Renewal and Opportunities (GRO) program.

The GRO program is available to all municipalities outside Winnipeg. It provides funding for critical infrastructure that support communities.

Simard added that 2025-26 Manitoba GRO recipients will be announced by the end of this year.

## > BIRDS, FROM PG. 2

eyeliner]. Those of us driving last year spotted four great gray owls. Any owl is cool to get."

Driving the back roads and stopping to spot or listen for birds can be done individually — but don't bird and drive — or in teams in which one person can drive, one person can spot and count, and one person can pour coffee and distribute snacks.

Smith said she can always use more field and feeder counters to take part in the Hodgson count.

"If people can contact me before Dec. 18 (the Hodgson count is scheduled for Dec. 22), I can give them more information. If they want to help with driving, I can assign a route for them," said Smith.

Field counters are advised to dress accordingly. Snow-pants, puffer jacket, Arctic-quality snow boots are must-haves. So is a set of binoculars. People new to the census might want to bring a camera; they can snap a photo if they're unsure and let their organizer have a gander.

From ravens and redstarts to thrushes and thrashers, Smith can identify most birds by sight and sound, and volunteers don't need to be experts. They can write down the appearance of the bird and describe its behaviour for later review.

And there's always an app. Merlin, for instance, can help identify bird calls, although its not 100 per cent foolproof, said Smith. Those who prefer old school can bring along a print bird guide.

People can also use the website All About Birds.org, which provides quality photos and soundbites.

The five Interlake Christmas Bird Counts are as follows: Dec. 16 in Selkirk. Compiler Gerald Machnee. Contact: machneeg@gmail.com

Dec. 18 in Gimli. Compiler Bonnie Chartier. Contact: cwe@mymts.net

Dec. 20 in Balmoral. Compiler James Duncan. Contact: owlfamily@mymts.net

Dec. 20 at Oak Hammock Marsh. Compiler Paula Grief. Contact: p\_grief@ducks.ca

Dec. 22 in Hodgson. Compiler Joanne Smith. Contact: picsmith@live.ca

Visit the Birds Canada website and click on the map for information about Christmas Bird Counts in your area and how to contact a compiler. Field counter and feeder counter cheat sheets are also available.

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5:00 PM - Our Lady of the Lake, W. Beach  
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9:30 PM - St. Michael's, Gimli

#### Thursday, Dec 25 CHRISTMAS DAY

11:00 AM - St. Michael's Church

#### Saturday/Sunday - December 27/28

4:00 PM - Dec 27 - Our Lady of the Lake, W. Beach  
9:00 AM - Dec 28 - St. Benedict's, Camp Morton  
11:00 AM - Dec 28 - St. Michael's, Gimli

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11:00 AM - Thursday, Jan 1st - St. Michael's, Gimli

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**AA Winnipeg Beach**  
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Meetings are Saturdays  
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# get informed

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

## Manitoba RCMP launch annual holiday Checkstop campaign

### Increased roadside screening underway through December

By Lana Meier

As holiday gatherings ramp up across the province, Manitoba RCMP are once again stepping up enforcement on roads and highways with the launch of their annual December Checkstop campaign.

Beginning last weekend and continuing throughout the month, motorists can expect to see a heightened police presence as officers conduct roadside stops, check for signs of impairment and complete mandatory alcohol and

drug screenings.

“If enjoying your holiday season involves consuming drugs or alcohol, then we strongly encourage you to plan ahead so you have a safe ride home,” said Insp. Robert Wusky-nyk, head of Manitoba RCMP Traffic Services. “You can avoid a criminal charge and save lives by arranging for a designated driver or calling a cab, rideshare or Operation Red Nose to get you home.”

Officers will be equipped with screening devices that detect alcohol and drugs, and anyone found impaired faces serious consequences — including criminal charges, licence suspension, vehicle impoundment and costly fines. Beyond legal penalties, police stress the emotional bur-

den and irreversible harm caused when impaired driving results in injury or death.

Last year, 21 fatal collisions occurred in RCMP jurisdiction where drug or alcohol impairment was suspected as a contributing factor. An additional 43 collisions led to serious injuries where impairment was confirmed or believed to be involved.

Police say those tragedies were preventable, and are urging Manitobans to make responsible choices before heading out to holiday parties and family gatherings.

The message is simple — don’t drink or use drugs and drive. Plan a safe ride, look out for friends and loved ones, and help ensure everyone gets home for the holidays.

## Correction

By Lana Meier

In the article “Shortfall persists in paramedic hiring, EMRs not a solution, says MAHCP,” published in the Dec. 4 edition of the *Express Weekly News*, there are a number of corrections to be noted that occurred during editing.

The story referenced temporary

emergency department closures in Arborg, Eriksdale and Teulon; however, Arborg and Teulon do not have emergency rooms. The article should have stated that a shortage of rural paramedics and temporary emergency department closures in the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority have led to longer transports and delayed response times in some cases.

The story also stated that a Fisher man’s death may have been connected to an inability to reach 911. This is

not confirmed. The sentence should read: Issues with the 911 telephone system resulted in dropped calls in municipalities such as Fisher and Bifrost-Riverton. In one RM of Fisher incident, family members reported being unable to dial out to 911 during a medical emergency, although it has not been determined whether this played a role in the man’s death.

The *Express* apologizes to reporter Patricia Barrett for the errors.

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# Bouncing into business: The Blanco Bounce brings local inflatable fun

By E. Antonio

Popularity in the inflatables industry has blown up in recent years — especially for The Blanco Bounce owner Gracie Omerbasi.

She and her family live in Warren, where they rent out bouncy castles and ball pits for events in Warren, Winnipeg and surrounding areas. Omerbasi, who came to Canada from the Philippines in her teens, launched the business this past September after she struggled to find an affordable inflatable rental company for her son's first birthday party.

"Everything I was finding was so pricey, so I figured I would just buy my own, and from there I kept ordering more and more inflatables," she said.

The Blanco Bounce currently offers

eight different white inflatables, including several sizes of bouncy castles, an eight-foot-wide ball pit and a bubble balloon house. Omerbasi prefers the all-white colour scheme to keep the business modern and fresh — and because white fits seamlessly into any event theme.

"Whether it is a birthday party or wedding, these inflatables will fit in with the rest of your decorations," she said. "We also have different coloured balls for the ball pit to further match your party's theme."

The Blanco Bounce provides full setup and takedown and rents inflatables for five-hour periods, with the option to extend rental times when booking. They are licensed and insured for both indoor and outdoor events and offer a range of packages



Gracie Omerbasi and her husband, Enes, founded The Blanco Bounce — a modern inflatables company based in Warren — after struggling to find an affordable rental option for their son's first birthday.



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

The Blanco Bounce offers eight modern white inflatables available to rent for events in Warren, Winnipeg and surrounding communities.

tailored to different party sizes.

Although the business has only been open for a few months, Omerbasi said she already feels like a successful entrepreneur, especially with most weekends booking up completely. For her, success looks like one booking per week — so fully booked weekends feel like a bonus.

"I truly never thought I would be in this kind of business," she added. "Now I want to provide an entertainment option for families in the community so they can have fun just like the kids had at our own party."

Omerbasi and her husband, who is Bosnian, have lived in Warren for only three years but say they have felt warmly welcomed. As immigrants, moving to Canada alone was a major change, but both have found a sense of home in the community.

"Moving to Warren has been the absolute greatest. It is so quiet, we have a beautiful piece of land and it's been such a good community — we love it here."

Looking ahead, she hopes The Blanco Bounce continues to grow at a steady pace and would eventually like to add soft-play items to the rental lineup if there is enough interest. She recommends booking at least two weeks in advance.

Inquiries can be made through Instagram and Facebook at @TheBlancoBounce, through their website [www.theblancobounce.ca](http://www.theblancobounce.ca) or by email at [theblancobounce@hotmail.com](mailto:theblancobounce@hotmail.com).

"Thank you for supporting our family business and letting us be a part of your special moments," Omerbasi added.

# Construction to begin on new Eriksdale ER in new year

By Lana Meier

Construction on a major redevelopment of the emergency department at E.M. Crowe Memorial Hospital in Eriksdale is set to begin early in the new year, the province announced last week.

Manitoba Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care has awarded the construction-management tender for the \$8.6-million project, paving the way for work to start in February. Early preparation — including site setup, minor demolition and safety measures — is expected to begin first, with full construction scheduled to follow later that month.

Health Minister Uzoma Asagwara said the project will modernize the emergency and acute care areas, improve patient flow and create a safer, more functional space for staff and patients.

"People in the Interlake region have been calling for a renewed emergency department that better supports patients, families and front-line staff, and we are proud to be moving that work forward," Asagwara said in the announcement. "These renovations will improve safety, comfort and flow for patients while giving staff a modern environment to deliver the care they want to provide."

The redevelopment is designed to increase treatment capacity within the existing footprint while improving privacy, accessibility and safety. Plans include upgraded triage and waiting spaces, modernized inpatient rooms, new family and crisis-intervention areas, expanded staff workspaces and updated technology throughout.

More than 140 community members, including local residents, First Nations health teams and service providers, contributed input through surveys and at an open house held in March 2025.

Candace Blahey, director of health services acute care for the Interlake-

Eastern Regional Health Authority, said the local support has been vital in moving the project forward.

"The Eriksdale emergency department redevelopment project offers tangible improvements to patient care, safety, patient flow and the overall patient experience," Blahey said. "IERHA is grateful for the advocacy efforts from both the community and Eriksdale hospital staff, as well as their planning input and ongoing support for this significant project."

Officials say the upgrades are expected to strengthen service delivery and support long-term stabilization of emergency care in the region.

# Canada Post text scam prompts holiday caution

By Patricia Barrett

The delivery of text messages that are reputedly from Canada Post — especially during the Christmas season when parcels are being shipped — should be carefully scrutinized before clicking any embedded links as they might be a scam.

The *Express Weekly News* received a text message last week advising it that a “delivery was canceled due to an incorrect address” and instructing the paper to click an embedded link to add the correct address and reschedule the delivery.

The *Express* was not expecting a delivery and had also not signed up for text notifications from Canada Post — the only means by which Canada Post will out send texts.

The number from which the text message originated is not listed on Canada Post’s website, indicating the message is likely a scam. And the embedded link the *Express* was invited to click containing the string UrjQITUTSE is not Canada Post’s legitimate domain.

Clicking links in text messages could result in malware being downloaded to a cellphone or used to steal personal or financial information. People should also not click on “Unsubscribe” links as they could also be malware.

Canada Post states on its website that it sees text messages circulating from time to time that “appear to be from Canada Post.”

Some texts might inform a customer that a deliv-

ery has been put on hold due to unpaid shipping fees and asks a customer to click the embedded link to pay the shipping cost. Canada Post says “This is NOT from Canada Post and should be deleted.”

The Crown corporation does not send people text messages asking for payments for delivery or tracking, credit card or banking information, addresses or account login details.

Signs of a text scam include:

The creation of a sense of urgency to act on a held-up Canada Post delivery, a link to download a file, a link that does not point to a legitimate Canada Post webpage (i.e., canadapost-postescanada.ca) and poor grammar.

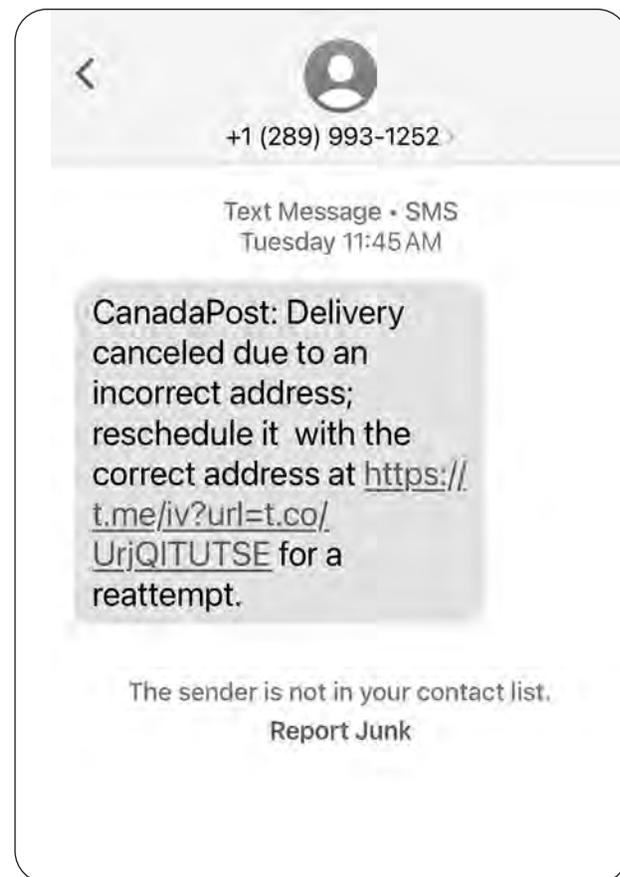
Some scam texts may include links with Canada Post’s name in it, leading people to assume it’s legitimate, but people should verify the link on the corporation’s website before clicking it.

Suspicious texts can be reported as junk and sent to a cellphone user’s communications carrier.

Suspicious texts can also be reported to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, which has an A-Z list of scams on its website.

## EXPRESS IMAGE SUBMITTED

A screenshot of an unsolicited text sent to an *Express Weekly News* cellphone, saying a package can’t be delivered until someone clicks on the embedded link and provides an address. The text is likely a scam.



## > WELLNESS, FROM PG. 4

learned to manage a lot during that time.”

But as she settled into motherhood and gained experience in system navigation, she began to see gaps that felt increasingly difficult to ignore. Young emphasizes that her decision to leave the regional structure was not about a lack of commitment — but about being unable to deliver care in the way she believed would actually move outcomes.

“Over the years it became apparent that the priorities and goals I had for improving health outcomes in my communities were not aligned with regional leadership,” she explained. “Reconciling the love for my job and my commitment to community with the inability to make that job either sustainable or authentic became impossible.”

Young submitted her resignation to the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority in November 2024. The choice, she said, was painful — but necessary.

At the same time, an opportunity emerged. The RM of Coldwell and Sigfusson Northern approached her with the idea of building something new — a private clinic created from the ground up to reflect community needs rather than system limitations.

“I am immensely grateful for the op-

portunity to open Prairie Sky Health & Wellness,” she said. “It allows me to honour the commitments I’ve made to my communities while participating more fully in my family life and being true to myself.”

Prairie Sky Health & Wellness officially opened Oct. 20, 2025. It offers primary care in Lundar and at Lake Manitoba First Nation, where Young provides two to three clinic days per month. The building in use today is Phase 1 of a longer development plan made possible through infrastructure partnerships with Sigfusson Northern.

Inside the clinic are exam rooms, therapy spaces, administrative offices and room for growth. Mental health services are already offered on-site through Newleaf Therapy with therapist Amber Dregger, and massage therapy is scheduled to begin in March 2026.

Young is clear that the clinic was designed to evolve. Capacity exists — and is actively open — for additional family physicians, nurse practitioners, physiotherapists, foot care nurses and other allied health providers, with flexible participation models to attract diverse practitioners.

Students from the Masters of Physician Assistant Studies Program and Northern Remote Family Medicine Program also train at the clinic — something Young says is strategic.

“Hosting learners is an important part of recruiting medical professionals to rural and remote Manitoba,” she said. “It is also of benefit to youth in our communities to connect with these learners. We look forward to working with Lundar Collegiate on a longitudinal wellness program.”

As staffing grows, Phase 2 will include furnished housing for visiting professionals — addressing a barrier familiar across rural Manitoba. Young also plans to begin biannual wellness days, community outreach events and ongoing mentorship for local students considering health careers.

Young identifies proudly as Métis, emphasizing that the way she experiences medicine — from patient relationships to systemic navigation — cannot be separated from identity.

“My perceptions and experiences along this journey were often influenced by my Métis identity,” she said. “As an Indigenous person navigating medicine and now a woman in a position of privilege, I have not often felt like I belonged. More commonly I have felt I needed to make a place for myself — not just for me but for others who have yet to come.”

Prairie Sky Health & Wellness, she hopes, can be that place.

She does not have formal training in Indigenous healing practices but values community-held knowledge and welcomes respectful learning.

“I believe in its value, and I am always thankful to patients and community members who share their knowledge with me,” she said.

Looking ahead, Young sees the future of rural medicine rooted not in physician recruitment alone but in multidisciplinary teams — a model expected to grow under Canada’s upcoming funding changes recognizing “physician equivalent” services such as nurse practitioners.

“Broadening the disciplines of providers broadens the pool of people to recruit from,” she said. “When built thoughtfully, multidisciplinary teams utilize physician expertise more effectively and allow the team to reach more patients. I believe this model is the model to strive for.”

Her goal is a clinic environment where professionals feel supported, community-connected and able to practise sustainably.

“There is more work here than I could ever hope to attend to on my own,” she said. “I look forward to sharing this work — and my communities — with new team members.”

The response so far has encouraged her. Community members have stopped in, sent gifts and offered thanks. Others simply say “Welcome home.”

And for Young, coming home — and building something built from home — is exactly the point.

# Gimli Garden Club announces 2025 contest winners

By Patricia Simcoe-Rosenbaum

The Gimli Garden Club has announced the winners of its first annual Garden Contest, which drew a wide range of creative submissions from across the Interlake.

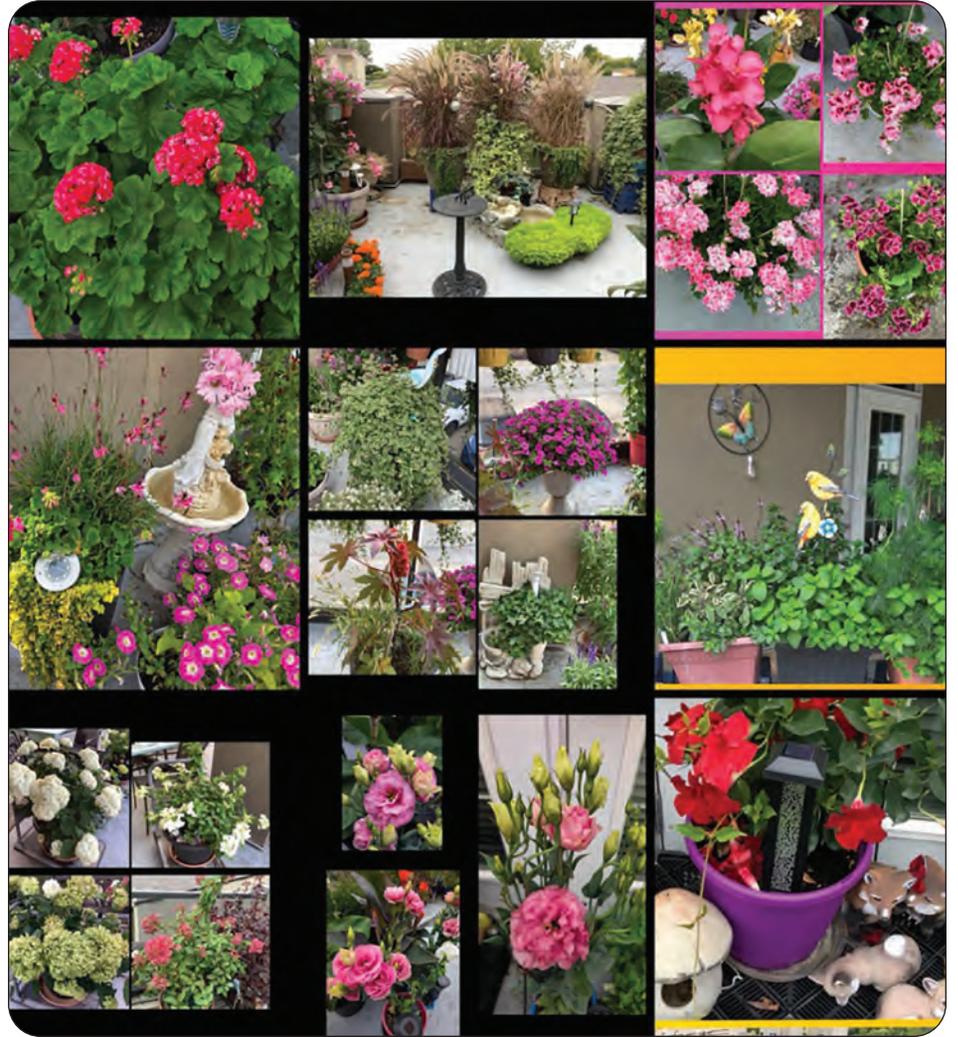
Organizers say the entries — from decorative planters to imaginative backyard hideaways — showcased the region's abundant gardening talent. In fact, the quality was so strong that judges opted for a random draw rather than selecting winners based on scoring. Photos of all submissions are posted on the club's Facebook page.

This year's winners are Susan H. (Gimli), Jean D. (Winnipeg Beach) and Barb A. (Sandy Hook).

"A huge bouquet of thanks" goes out to everyone who submitted their garden projects. With winter settling in and local gardens now put to bed, club members say it's the perfect time to dream and plan for the 2026 growing season.

**"A HUGE BOUQUET OF THANKS."**

The Gimli Garden Club is welcoming new members. Informal gatherings are held on the third Monday of January and February at 2 p.m. at the Gimli Multi-Purpose Building, with formal meetings resuming in March. Those interested in joining can contact Rose Marie at 204-642-8678 for more information.



**EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED**

The Gimli Garden Club highlighted local gardening talent through its first annual Garden Contest, drawing imaginative entries from across the Interlake.

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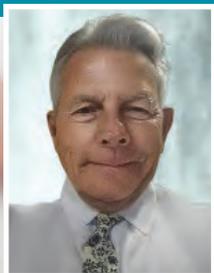
**Arborg & District Christmas Cheer Board**

Once again, the Arborg & District Christmas Cheer Board is preparing Christmas hampers. To request a Christmas hamper, please contact Courtney at 204-671-0559. The deadline for requests is Monday, December 15th and the Christmas hampers will be available for pick up or delivery on Monday, December 22nd.

Monetary donations can be sent by e-transfer to ADcheerboard@gmail.com, mailed to Box 185 Arborg MB R0C 0A0, or may be deposited at the Arborg branches of Access Credit Union or CIBC. Non-perishable food items and new toys can be dropped off at participating local businesses.

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## Arborg's Riverdale Place Workshop turns leftover wood into festive Christmas decorations

### Gift store open weekdays, proceeds to participants with disabilities

By Patricia Barrett

If you're stuck for ideas of what to get for a loved one for Christmas or want to decorate your home in holiday style, look no further than Riverdale Place Workshop in Arborg.

The workshop's participants have put their creative talents to work and made very festive signs, Christmas trees and other items using leftover pieces of wood that accumulate from the woodworking program.

Workshop manager Phyllis (Susie) Johnson said she wanted to make use of the wood scraps by turning them into something to celebrate the season. She came up with the idea of creating decorative signs and other items that they're now selling in the gift store, which is part of the workshop building.

Workshop participants were enthusiastic about making the signs and produced quality pieces.

"Everything we've asked the participants to do — sand, paint — they've been so happy to do it. This is something different from what they'd normally do, and they really enjoyed the change," said Johnson. "I was really pleased about that. And the staff are ecstatic to be doing this, too."

The Christmas signs come in different sizes. There are banner-length wooden signs painted in hot red with sayings such as "it's the most wonderful time of the year" and Santa's face, wooden Christmas trees made in minimalist style, and snowmen created from long wood panels that include festive wooden hats and real Christmas scarves.

The workshop also has a selection of participant-made wooden bird houses, farm animals, farm buildings, playing card holders in various designs, Icelandic coffee bags and knitted items including scarves.

The workshop is a not-for-profit organization that provides vocational training and activities to adults with intellectual and physical disabilities. Overseen by a board, the workshop celebrated its 50th anniversary this year. It offers paid employment to its participants, some of whom work in the woodworking shop, carrying



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY PHYLLIS (SUSIE) JOHNSON

Handcrafted wooden snowmen, complete with festive hats and scarves, are among the holiday creations now available at the Riverdale Place Workshop gift store in Arborg. Participants have been repurposing leftover wood from the workshop's woodworking program into seasonal décor, including signs, minimalist Christmas trees and bird houses, with proceeds supporting programming and activities.



out repairs of pallets used by local industries or building picnic tables. The workshop also provides a valuable curbside recycling program for the Town of Arborg, Riverton and select locations in the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton. It diverted over 235,000 kilograms of recyclable material from the landfill in 2023. Workshop activities include music, craft-making, dancing, social outings and special events.

"In September for Truth & Reconciliation Day, we had an afternoon tea with bannock, story-telling and guests. That was a new event this

year," said Johnson. "We have participants and staff who are Aboriginal and Métis so we honoured that day."

The proceeds from the sale of the seasonal decorations will go straight back into supporting programming and activities for the workshop participants, she said.

The Riverdale Place Workshop's gift store is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The workshop is located on 111 St. Phillips Dr. at the junction of Highway 68, just west of Arborg. For more information, call 204-376-5584.

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# MLA Derek Johnson hosts community coffee events



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Derek Johnson, MLA for Interlake-Gimli, hosted a Coffee with Your MLA event last Friday at his Gimli and Arborg offices. The informal gatherings offered residents a chance to share concerns, ask questions and engage in meaningful conversations with their representative.

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## From clay to kiln: Arborg artist and Creative Cocoon bring sculpting to the community

By Patricia Barrett

Arborg's Creative Cocoon teamed up with local artist Jerry Maryniuk to offer a hand-sculpted pottery class that featured owls.

Maryniuk said he's taught art classes in the past, including caricatures, but this was the first clay sculpture class he's taught. He had his participants make a variety of owls, including snowy, great horned and grey.

"Owls are a good introduction to teaching clay because they don't have a lot of appendages to deal with," said Maryniuk, who has made a number of life-like owls and sold them at craft shows.

Maryniuk is a retired police forensic artist who turned his skills to sculpting, painting, cartooning and writing after retirement. As a member of the Interlake Wave artists group, Maryniuk has exhibited his work at a number of shows.

He opened his sculpting class to people with or without experience. It drew a couple of students from Arborg and Arnes, adults and even a few other Interlake artists. Maryniuk even made them custom tools so that they could create the feathers.

"Everything was provided for the students, from the clay to the kiln to the paint," said Maryniuk. "The students made sculptures about 4-5 inches high."

The Creative Cocoon is a non-profit organization that promotes the arts and wellbeing in Arborg and surrounding communities. Formed in 2016, it partners with artists, schools and organizations to offer affordable workshops for people of all ages in the community. In addition to pottery, programs include dance, food, music



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY LISA KLYM AND JERRY MARYNIUK

Participants add final touches to their hand-sculpted owl figures during a Creative Cocoon pottery workshop led by artist Jerry Maryniuk in Arborg. After shaping and kiln-firing the pieces, students returned to finish detailing and mounting their owls as part of the three-day class.

and a theatre program for youth and adults, seniors and people with disabilities.

With a final class to go this week — the Cocoon generously provided an extra class to a number of students who were temporarily taken out by

seasonal flu — Maryniuk said his students are putting the finishing touches on their artwork and mounting them for display on walls or tables.

With the success of this class, Maryniuk said there are tentative plans to offer another sculpting class next year, likely in late winter or early spring. That one might involve the tricky art of making appendages.

Lisa Klym, who sits on the Creative Cocoon board as co-chair, said the three-day workshop attracted nine

participants.

"They hand-sculpted a unique owl from potter's clay and learned techniques to create their very own sculpture, which then was kiln-fired and transformed into a stunning piece of art, and mounted on wood or rock," said Klym.

Visit the Creative Cocoon online: <https://thecreativecocoon.ca> for details about upcoming workshops and other programs.

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# Future of farming, veterinary shortages top of the list at Balmoral town hall

By Patricia Barrett

Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman MP James Bezan organized a town hall a few weeks ago in Balmoral to gauge the state of agriculture in the area and gather input from farmers on how to improve the industry.

Bezan was joined by Alberta Conservative MP John Barlow (Foothills) at the Balmoral Community Hall where farmers, residents and municipal politicians sat down with the MPs to discuss issues such as agricultural exports within the U.S. tariff milieu, the veterinary crisis in the Interlake and farming succession.

The small gathering at the two-hour meeting on Nov. 29 brought big issues to the table and offered insights for the politicians to take back to Ottawa.

There have always been major troughs affecting Canadian agriculture. The BSE (mad cow disease) crisis about 20 years ago was one of them. The current trough is U.S. president Donald Trump's imposition of tariffs, which has "sharply reduced" Canadian agricultural exports to the U.S., with beef, pork and canola among the sectors hardest hit, according to researchers at Dalhousie, St. Thomas and Laval universities.

Touching on the issue of tariffs, Bezan said "we still ship a lot [of cattle] south and American packers need our animals to keep running full time." Shipping Canadian cattle to Europe is difficult as European standards are used as "non-tariff trade barriers."

There are two major meat processors in Canada — Cargill and JBS. With respect to Manitoba's ability to slaughter its own cattle, Bezan said there's progress. Although Manitoba has only one packer, that packer is increasing its capacity.

"We got one packer left in Manitoba run by Calvin Vaags [True North Foods, Manitoba's only federally certified ruminant processing plant near Carman], and they're expanding. They're five days a week right now and they're going to a double shift," said Bezan. "So we do that have that option. They're doing well. ... Alberta has two big plants and Cargill still has a plant in Ontario, and that's about it."

Barlow said interprovincial trade barriers on processed meat were removed during the COVID pandemic to "move processed meat across provincial borders" and "we'll be trying

to do that again through legislation to make it permanent." [Alberta] cattle producers "on the ground" want more competition.

"They're not going to compete with Cargill and JBS; they want more options. We'll see if that gives rebirth to [the industry] ...," said Barlow, who is the federal shadow minister for agriculture and agri-food. "This is [an opportunity] for us to move beef around interprovincial boundaries."

Rockwood Reeve Wes Taplin and Coun. Neal Wirgau, who's a cattle producer, expressed concerns about the future of farming as farmers and producers inch closer to retirement and the cost of farming has skyrocketed. Younger farmers just can't afford to shell out hundreds of thousands of dollars to get into the industry. And fewer young people want to take over family farms when they look at the profitability

of some sectors, such as cattle. The price and availability of land is also a challenge.

"It's tough for producers to expand their cattle herds, and guys can't afford to get into it. [After BSE, the industry] never came back. The guys were at an age in their life where it was easier to say goodbye," said Taplin. "Things come in cycles and there was a cycle when everyone got out of cattle and went into grain and, now, I think they're realizing they can't have all their eggs in one basket. But it's a heck of a thing to get back into [cattle]. For the younger farmer to come back into, it's just about impossible."

Barlow said they're trying to come up with some ideas as to how "young guys can come in and start buying cows again." There may be an opportunity to improve options through Farm Credit Canada, which provides financing.

One of the major challenges in the Interlake area is a shortage of veterinarians to take care of livestock.

"One of the things I think we've got to do is buy more seats for veterinary school," said Wirgau.

At the recent Association of Manitoba Municipalities conference, Wirgau said he was talking with a counterpart from Alonsa who told him they have a fairly new vet clinic sitting empty because they cannot find a veterinarian.

"Can you blame them? You go work on a puppy or a kitty and you can charge \$1,000," said Wirgau, "or go

do a caesarean on a cow in a cold barn for \$500 and risk your life."

In a briefing note from January 2024, the Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) said the province is at a "crisis" level with shortages of veterinarians and registered veterinary technologists (RVT).

"Based on a recent workforce survey, there are at least 68.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) veterinarian positions and 79.75 FTE RVT positions that remain unfilled and are needed to meet the current demand in the private clinic practice sector alone," states the briefing note. "The MVMA asserts that the shortage of veterinary professionals is at crisis levels and that immediate action is required to ensure that Manitobans and their animals have reasonable access to veterinary care."

Prospective vets have to leave Manitoba to train at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan or another veterinary college.

Barlow said the veterinarian situation across the country is "pretty much in a crisis." And foreign trained veterinarians living in Canada are not being moved quickly enough through the system in order to make them eligible to practice.

"We meet with the deans of the vet colleges twice a year, and ... the bottleneck is 1,000. They have 1,000 foreign trained vets that are in Canada and cannot get their credentials to operate in Canada," said Barlow.

A 2023 briefing note from Saskatchewan's veterinary college, which is the only English-language host site for the clinical proficiency exam (CPE) for foreign trained vets, says it can triple the number of qualified vets if it can obtain financial support to establish a national CPE testing centre with



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY PATRICIA BARRETT  
Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman MP James Bezan organized a town hall in Balmoral on Nov. 29 to hear from constituents in his riding on various issues in the agricultural industry.

more capacity.

Barlow added that the opposition wants the Liberal government to keep the temporary foreign workers program's agriculture stream going as it works and Canada needs "a reliable labour stream for food production."

Bezan said there are issues with bringing in foreign workers to help with Canada's agricultural issues, and they need to be addressed.

"The problem is all the students coming in here now aren't students; they say they're coming in as students. Our immigration system is broken," said Bezan. "We're talking about needing more teaching spots for veterinarians; you've got kids from other countries supposedly going into these [college, university] programs and they're not. They're taking up a spot that should have gone to someone else."

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# Festive family fun



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY CORRINE EINARSSON

The Geysir Hall Christmas party on Nov. 29 brought together all ages for an evening of festive fun, including a visit from Santa and multigenerational family photos.



# Deer heads scored at annual Big Buck Night in Chatfield



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY SHELBY PRUS

Board member Gowan Emms, left, and club president Jack Cruise, right, presented plaques for the youth typical deer category at the Chatfield Community Club's Big Buck Night on Nov. 27 at the Chatfield community hall. Pictured left: first place winner Carmen Thorgilsson; middle: second place winner Oliver Sigurdson; right: third place winner Harley Halldorson.

By Jo-Anne Procter

The Chatfield Community Club held its annual Big Buck Night at the community hall on Nov. 27, with hunters and guests gathering for the scoring of antlers by the Manitoba Big Game Trophy Association (MBGTA). A total of 28 heads were entered this year.

In the adult typical class, first place went to Tayden Hazelton of Inwood with a score of 162 3/8 inches, qualifying for the 57th Anniversary Edition of the Manitoba Record Book (RB). Second place was awarded to Jay McCauley of Lundar at 160 inches (RB) and third place to Dave Mozdzen of Stonewall scoring 156 2/8 inches.

In the adult non-typical class, Danny Kleinsasser of Stonewall placed first with 177 1/8 inches. Second place was awarded to Raleigh Plett of Arborg at 174 4/8 inches, followed by Ben Murray of Portage la Prairie in third place

at 165 4/8 inches.

There were five entries in the youth typical class, with four qualifying for the record book. First place went to Carmen Thorgilsson of Lundar scoring 144 7/8 inches. Second place was Oliver Sigurdson of Riverton at 120 4/8 inches, third place was Harley Halldorson of Lundar at 115 6/8 inches, and fourth place was awarded to Jordan Blewer of Stonewall for a 107.88 inches entry.

The MBGTA is a non-profit organization founded in 1969. It scores and records antlers and bear skulls from big game harvested in Manitoba, maintaining the Manitoba Record Book. Volunteer scorers travel throughout the province to attend events and competitions, entering qualifying specimens based on minimum measurement requirements.



Adult typical first place: Tayden Hazelton of Inwood in the middle.



Adult typical third place: Dave Mozdzen of Stonewall, middle.



Adult non-typical first place: Danny Kleinsasser of Stonewall.



Adult non-typical second place: Raleigh Plett of Arborg.

## 2025 Holiday Events

- Wed. Dec. 10** Gimli High School Winter Band Concert 7:00pm
- Thurs. Dec. 11** Riverton and Arborg Collegiate's Evening of the Arts - Riverton Hall - doors open 6:00pm Entertainment (instrumental, choral, visual arts and dessert reception) 7:00pm Riverton Hall (silver collection, 50/50 and Icelandic Christmas Raffle)
- Fri. Dec. 12** Arborg Christmas Market 5:00pm - 9:00pm
- Sat. Dec. 13** Fisher Branch Breakfast with Santa 9:00am - 11:00am Ukrainian Hall
- Sat. Dec. 13** Lundar Santa Parade 6:00pm
- Sun. Dec. 14** Riverton & District Friendship Centre - Grinchmas Party - Riverton Hall 1:00pm - 4:00pm
- Mon. Dec. 15** Sigurbjorg Stefansson Early School Holiday Concerts 1:45pm and 6:30pm
- Wed. Dec. 16** Arborg Early Middle School Winter Concert 11:30am and 6:00pm Kindergarten - Grade 2
- Tues. Dec. 16** Riverton Early Middle School (Grades K-6) Christmas Concert 2:00pm and 7:00pm
- Tues. Dec. 16** Dr. George Johnson Middle School Winter Concert Gimli 2:00pm and 6:00pm
- Tues. Dec. 16** Alf Cuthbert School Christmas Concert 7:00pm Moosehorn
- Tues. Dec. 16** Lundar Personal Care Home Christmas Tea 5:00pm - 7:00pm
- Wed. Dec. 17** Ashern Early Years Christmas Concert
- Wed. Dec. 17** Winnipeg Beach School Holiday Concert 1:00pm and 6:00pm
- Wed. Dec. 17** Arborg Early Middle School Winter Concert 11:30am and 6:00pm Grades 3-6
- Wed. Dec. 17** Fisher Branch Early Years School Christmas Concert 2:00pm and 6:30pm
- Wed. Dec. 17** Lundar Early Years School Christmas Concert 6:00pm

# Eriksdale Cookie Caper raises \$3,000 for E.M. Crowe Memorial Hospital

By E. Antonio

The E.M. Crowe Memorial Hospital Guild hosted its first Cookie Caper on Nov. 22, pairing the fundraiser with photos with Santa, a silent auction and an afternoon tea with homemade dainties.

The event raised more than \$3,000 to support guild initiatives. Guild president Donna Pool said she was proud to revive a pre-COVID tradition once organized by earlier community groups.

"The guild resurrected it as it was such a big hit in the past," she said. "It was also wonderful seeing members of our community socializing and enjoying the fruits of our labour."

More than 3,500 cookies — baked by guild members, community volunteers and supporters — were available for purchase. Attendees spent the afternoon visiting, browsing Christmas goodies and supporting the hospital.

Pool added that the guild is preparing for upgrades at the E.M. Crowe Memorial Hospital.



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

E.M. Crowe Memorial Hospital Guild pose with Santa Claus at their Cookie Caper fundraiser on Nov. 22.

"Plans are underway to renovate the emergency room, as mandated by the provincial government," she said. "It is our intent to provide funds for enhanced services in our hospital."

# Riverton Ice Fishing Derby returns Feb. 16 with expanded focus on community support

By Lana Meier

Riverton anglers are already gearing up for one of the community's most anticipated winter traditions, as preparations are underway for the 2026 Riverton Ice Fishing Derby, set for Feb. 16. The derby draws participants from across the Interlake each year, filling the ice with anglers of all ages hoping to hook a prize fish — and enjoy a day outdoors with family and friends.

Early bird tickets are now on sale and must be purchased by Dec. 22. Everyone who buys early will be entered into a draw for \$600, generously donated by the Riverton Ladies Djórfung Aid. Tickets are \$45 for adults and \$25 for youth 17 and under.

Early bird tickets are available at:

- Riverton-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission – Kyra Toderan
- Riverton & District Friendship Centre
- Riverton Minor Hockey – Ross Copper & Shane Sigurdson
- Wayne Furgala
- Riverton Co-op – Darlene Yaremus
- Canco Gas Station
- Gimli Home Hardware

While fishing is central to the excitement, organizers emphasize the derby's broader purpose. According to Kyra Toderan, recreation and community development coordinator, the event is designed not only to bring people together, but to give back.

"The Riverton Ice Fishing Derby is a non-profit, community-driven event that raises funds for local organizations and public facilities," she said. "Our purpose is to provide an affordable, family-oriented experience while strengthening the community through financial support."

Proceeds from the 2026 derby will be distributed as follows:

- 40% – Riverton Minor Hockey



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

A young announcer fired up the crowd with a loud speaker during the inaugural Riverton Ice Fishing Derby on Lake Winnipeg last winter, helping keep spirits high as hundreds of anglers turned out to fish, cheer on family and friends, and support local causes in Riverton.

- 20% – Djórfung Ladies Aid (Pergola floor project)
  - 20% – Riverton Transportation & Heritage Centre
  - 20% – Riverton & District Friendship Centre
- Toderan said events like this only happen through community involvement.

"Every ticket sale keeps programs affordable and supports services people rely on," she said. "It also showcases Riverton as a welcoming, vibrant community while supporting local business and bringing visitors to town."

The 2025 derby, Riverton's first annual event, exceeded all expectations:

- 230 adult tickets
- 87 youth tickets

- \$17,000+ in prizes
- \$16,000 profit donated back to the community, split between Riverton Minor Hockey and the Riverton Transportation & Heritage Centre

Because of that momentum, organizers expect 2026 to be bigger, more efficient and even more community-centred, with pre-drilled holes, warming trailers and food on-site again.

From sunrise preparations to the final prize draws, derby day is described as electric.

The morning begins with a pancake breakfast, followed by a rush of families and seasoned anglers heading onto Lake Winnipeg. Youth run between holes, volunteers circulate with coffee, and the sound of fish stories fills the air. As the final draws begin at Riverton Hall, the crowd buzzes with anticipation — a celebration as much about community as it is about fishing.

Prize packages for 2026 will be announced closer to the event, but anglers can expect another strong lineup of cash categories and donated prizes, similar to last year's \$17,000 prize pool.

What participants need to know:

- Fishing takes place within a marked derby zone
- Manitoba angling regulations apply
- Start and end times must be followed
- Rules provided with ticket purchase
- Pre-drilled holes provided
- Bring your own gear — no rentals available
- Warming trailers and food available on-site

"The derby is for everyone," said Toderan. "You don't need to be a pro — just someone who enjoys a good community day. Whether you fish, volunteer or just join for breakfast and prizes, you're part of what makes this special."

For more information, contact [rivertonicefishing-derby@gmail.com](mailto:rivertonicefishing-derby@gmail.com) or visit the Riverton Ice Fishing Derby Facebook page.

## Just jump in: Pool time for three generations raises over \$500 for CancerCare Manitoba

By Patricia Barrett

A resident from the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton embarked on a personal motivational challenge last month to go the distance in the pool while raising money for CancerCare Manitoba.

Samantha Hampton completed a 30-kilometre swim (about 19 miles) in support of cancer research and services for those battling cancer.

The 30-kilometre swim was tantamount to someone swimming across Lake Winnipeg from Gimli to the east shore near Grand Marais.

Hampton said she used to play water polo and decided to dip her toe back into the pool by embarking on a five-kilometre fundraiser for CancerCare Manitoba after seeing the organization promoting a swim challenge for the month of November. But she turned five into 30 kilometres when she realized she could break barriers, swimming farther and faster with subsequent pool time.

"I'm honestly blown away; completing 30 kilometres in 30 days didn't feel possible at the start. My first swim was 25 laps — and I was proud of that — then I hit 45, then 75. Eventually, my highest session was 115 laps," said Hampton. "When I started, it took me four minutes and 38 seconds to swim 100 metres. By the end of the month, I had cut that time almost in half to two minutes and 22 seconds."

Seeing the numbers on the page "shocked" her. In total she completed 1,200 laps.

"It's proof of how hard I worked and how much progress someone can make in a short period of time," she said.

What started out as a personal challenge became a three-generation challenge with Hampton's dad, Derek Hampton, and her daughter, Sophia, wanting to get into the swim of things. Hampton and Sophia swam at the Cindy Klassen Recreation Complex in Winnipeg where Hampton met her 30-kilometre goal and where Sophia logged pool time between her schoolwork and sports activities. Her dad swam over five kilometres at the Kinsmen Sherbrook Pool in Winnipeg.

Together, Hampton said they raised over \$500 for CancerCare, contributing to a provincial total of \$701,227.

"They feel grateful, proud and genuinely happy. We set a family goal of raising \$350 and together we passed \$500," said Hampton when asked how her dad and her daughter felt about contributing to cancer research. "It meant a lot to all of us to contribute in our own way. For my dad and for Sophia, it wasn't just about the laps: it was about doing something meaningful together and being part of a bigger cause."

Hampton said swimming has benefits for every age. The low-impact exercise is ideal for seniors, serves as great conditioning for adults and acts as a confidence-builder for youth. And she also discovered another benefit that people might normally associate with something like yoga.

"Something I discovered through this challenge is how uniquely quiet swimming is. It's just you, your lane and your thoughts. I try to stay focused on my breathing, but, inevitably, the rhythm of the water gives me space to think," said Hampton. "It be-



EXPRESS PHOTO COURTESY OF SAMANTHA HAMPTON

Three generations strong. Samantha Hampton, her dad, Derek and her daughter, Sophia, set a fundraising goal for CancerCare Manitoba and surpassed it by completing more than 35 kilometres in the pool and raising over \$500 for cancer research and patient support.

came an important part of my mental health — a full hour of uninterrupted time that I didn't realize I needed. The first 40 laps are always the toughest, but once you break through that barrier, you almost reach a cruising altitude where the next 60 seem to happen on their own."

Speaking of going farther, Hampton said she spent considerable time on the highway driving from the RM of Bifrost-Riverton to Winnipeg and back. Each swim day required a three-hour round-trip journey because "we don't have a local indoor pool."

The RM of Gimli has an outdoor pool as does the Town of Arborg. But the closest indoor swimming facility that offers public swimming times is in Selkirk.

"It's a real shame we don't have an indoor aquatic facility in the Interlake.

We need a pool that serves all age demographics for fitness, rehab, family programming, swim lessons and leisure. An accessible year-round aquatic space would benefit this entire region," said Hampton. "This challenge really highlighted how much potential there is, and how much need there is, for something local."

Even though the drive is a real slog, Hampton said she's going to continue on with swimming. She got to know regulars at the pool and the lifeguard would always ask how many laps she completed.

"It feels like I'm forming a little community there," she said. "I've also reached out to the Manitoba Water Polo Association about joining an adult recreation team. I played 20 years ago and loved it, so why not jump back in?"

# sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

## Falcons string together strong road efforts, split three-game stretch

By Haley Cvar

The Lundar Falcons picked up two wins in three outings this week in Capital Region Junior Hockey League action, highlighted by a pair of comeback performances and an overtime victory on the road.

Lundar opened its stretch on Dec. 2 with a 4-2 win over the North Winnipeg Satellites at Billy Mosienko Arena, overcoming an early two-goal deficit before taking control. The Satellites struck twice on the power play before the five-minute mark, but the Falcons replied with goals from Braeden Lu-

kas and Ethan Carnegie just over 30 seconds apart to tie the game 2-2 before the first intermission.

Daniel Masters put Lundar ahead midway through the second period, finishing a feed from Lukas and Kade Laughlin. Carnegie sealed the win with his second of the night on a power-play marker at 17:01 of the third. Goaltender Dylan Leclair steered aside 34 shots for a .944 save percentage in the victory. Lundar finished the night 1-for-4 on the man advantage and outshot the Satellites 35-36.

Two nights later at home, the Fal-

cons were limited offensively in a tight 2-1 loss to the league-leading Beausejour Comets on Dec. 6 at Lundar Arena. Beausejour opened the scoring at 10:05 of the first period and held Lundar to just two shots in the second. The Comets added an empty-netter in the final minute before Masters responded for Lundar with 28 seconds left, but the comeback fell short. Leclair was outstanding again, stopping 45 of 46 shots.

Lundar closed its weekend with a dramatic 4-3 overtime win in Selkirk on Dec. 7. After exchanging goals in

each period of regulation, Masters delivered the winner at 2:37 of overtime on a setup from Liam Russell. The Falcons also had goals from Lukas, Jayden Dyck and Masters in regulation, while goaltender Seth Hasker made 36 saves for his first win of the season.

The Falcons now sit fifth in the CRJHL standings at 3-9-0-3 with 17 points. Lundar returns to action on Saturday, Dec. 13, when they host the North Winnipeg Satellites at 7 p.m. at Lundar Arena.

# Varsity Thunder conclude championship season with year-end awards

By Kieran Reimer

Celebrations continued last week for the Varsity Interlake Thunder.

It's been just over a month since the Thunder defeated the St. Vital Mustangs in the 2025 Rural Manitoba Football League Championship in Stonewall. The Thunder finally got past the Mustangs this season after falling to them in the finals the previous two years.

They did it with their most dominant roster in that stretch, finishing the season a perfect 9-0.

On Saturday, Nov. 29, the Thunder gathered for their year-end awards banquet at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 52 in Stonewall.

Eight players received awards for their contributions this season, as selected by head coach Christof Hasselfield and staff.

Hasselfield has coached many of the players for multiple seasons, including graduating seniors who he has guided throughout their varsity careers.

"It's some of my favourite, most cherished memories," said Hasselfield. "Not just talking about a championship, but even just growing as a coach while those guys are growing up as players and kids and everything. Them being there when I make mistakes and forgiving me for it and vice versa. It's an awesome group. I look forward to the other guys, but this one will always be special to

me."

AJ Nadon was named the team's Most Valuable Player after once again leading the Thunder's run game. The 2025 season was his final year of eligibility for the senior running back from Winnipeg Beach.

Handling the ball often in 2025 was Gimli's Jessie Batenchuk, recipient of the Thunder's Most Outstanding Offensive Player Award. Batenchuk took on the starting quarterback role in 2024 after previously playing receiver. It proved to be a smooth transition for the now-senior QB, who capped his RMFL career with a championship.

A favourite target of his was Jamie Dandeneau, who received the Charlie Cook Leadership Award. The wide receiver from Stonewall was also a senior this season.

Paving the way for the Thunder offence was Gimli's Jakob Samborski, named Most Outstanding Lineman.

On defence, Stonewall's Cooper Ponton earned the Most Outstanding Defensive Player Award in his senior year.

Gimli's Dylan Maclean was also recognized in his final season with the Ed deLaroque Impact Player Award.

Rounding out the honours were Fraserwood's



Winnipeg Beach's AJ Nadon was the recipient of the Thunder's Most Valuable Player Award. The senior running back was one of eight award winners.

Marlo Lapierre and Gimli's Caleb Miyai. Lapierre received the Most Outstanding Special Teams Player Award, while Miyai was named Most Outstanding Rookie. Both are eligible to return in 2026.



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

The Varsity Interlake Thunder held their year-end awards on Saturday, Nov. 29 at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 52 in Stonewall, just weeks after defeating the St. Vital Mustangs for the 2025 RMFL Championship.

# Ice Dawgs look to rebound in Warriors, Habs matchups

By Haley Cvar

With the season's midpoint approaching and points at a premium, the Arborg Ice Dawgs face a pivotal back-to-back this weekend as they try to shake off a recent shutout loss and re-establish some traction in the Capital Region Junior Hockey League race.

Arborg enters the weekend sitting sixth in the standings at 2-11-0-2 for 10 points, tied with North Winnipeg and ahead of only Lundar. The Ice

Dawgs are coming off a 3-0 defeat to the La Broquerie Habs on Dec. 5, a night where they generated 29 shots but couldn't solve goaltender Jaxon Loewen, who stopped every attempt for a 29-save shutout. La Broquerie built its lead early with goals from Mason Hooper and Colton Pakoo before Pakoo added an empty-netter late in the third. Arborg netminder Paxton Moore kept things close with 27 saves on 29 shots.

The Ice Dawgs now turn their attention to two difficult matchups:

Friday, Dec. 12, they host the St. Malo Warriors at 8 p.m. at the Arborg & District Arena, welcoming a third-place Warriors squad carrying a .750 win percentage into town.

On Saturday, Dec. 13, Arborg travels south for a 7:30 p.m. meeting with the La Broquerie Habs at the HyLife Centre, a quick rematch with a club that has taken both head-to-head games

this season.

With back-to-back contests against two of the league's top four teams, the Ice Dawgs will look to tighten special teams, build on Moore's consistent goaltending and finally generate the offensive spark that has eluded them in recent weeks. A strong showing could begin to chip away at the standings gap as Arborg searches for a momentum swing heading into the holiday stretch.

# get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



## Santa Cookies

From red cookie dough, make one 1-inch ball and five 1/2-inch balls. From plain cookie dough, make one 3/4-inch ball and five 1/4-inch balls.

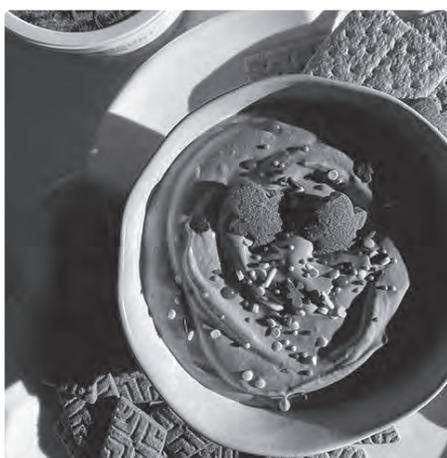
On prepared baking sheet, place red 1-inch ball and gently flatten until 1/2-inch thick. Attach four red 1/2-inch balls for arms and legs. Attach plain 3/4-inch ball for head and gently flatten until 1/2-inch thick. Attach plain 1/4-inch balls for hands and feet. Shape remaining red 1/2-inch ball into triangle for hat and attach. Repeat with remaining dough, arranging cookies 2 inches apart on baking sheet. Add chocolate candies for eyes and buttons.

Bake 12-15 minutes, or until lightly golden.

To make frosting: In medium bowl, beat butter and cream cheese until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add vanilla and powdered sugar; mix until combined.

To decorate: Place half of frosting in piping bag with small tip to line Santa's arms and legs. Place other half in second piping bag with small star tip to add Santa's beard, hat and hands. Put small dot of icing between eyes and beard and place red mini chocolate-coated candy on face for nose.

Yield: 14 cookies  
 1 cup (2 sticks) Maple Hill Salted Butter, at room temperature  
 1/2 cup brown sugar  
 1 tablespoon vanilla extract  
 1 large egg, at room temperature  
 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour  
 1/4 teaspoon salt  
 1 teaspoon red food coloring  
 mini chocolate chips  
 mini red chocolate-coated candies  
**Frosting:**  
 1/2 cup (1 stick) Maple Hill Salted Butter, at room temperature  
 4 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature  
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 2 1/2 cups powdered sugar  
 Preheat oven to 350 F and line two baking sheets with parchment paper.  
 In large mixing bowl, beat butter, sugar and vanilla until light and fluffy. Add egg and beat until combined. Add flour and salt; mix until dough begins to form ball.  
 Remove 1 cup dough and set aside. Add red food coloring to remaining dough.



## Gingerbread Dip

In medium bowl using electric mixer on medium speed, beat cream cheese and sugars about 1 minute. Add molasses and mix until combined.

Add Greek yogurt, ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg; beat until combined. Fold in whipped cream and mix until fully incorporated. Refrigerate 1 hour before serving or overnight.

Serve with graham crackers and fruit.

Servings: 8-12  
 4 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature  
 1/4 cup brown sugar  
 1/4 cup powdered sugar  
 3 tablespoons molasses  
 1 container (16 ounces) Maple Hill Vanilla Greek Yogurt  
 1 teaspoon ground ginger  
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
 2 cups whipped cream  
 graham crackers  
 fruit



# Ask the Money Lady

Have you been struggling in your career or relationships, and still unhappy?

Many people strive for their dream job, some employment position that they feel they can be successful in, but for whatever reason, they can't get it. Some have been proactive, prepared, took courses, schmoozed with all the right people and even wore their heart on their sleeve, only to have it ripped off and stepped on. Sound familiar? Sometimes no matter what you say or no matter what you are capable of, someone else holds the key to that acceptance and for whatever reason, they refuse to give you a chance. They come up with all the politically correct answers for your unsuitability, but the fact remains, they're in and your still out. So now what?

Back to the drawing board you go, to keep fighting. More courses, more training, more fake smiles and more believing you can get it someday. After all, doesn't every book out there tell you to never give up? No matter how many times you are getting beaten down and pummelled in the boxing ring of life. Even if you're beaten with blood all over you, barely able to rise from trying so hard, what do all the naysayers keep saying? "Fight back, get back in the game, and keep striving for your goal. Success is just around the corner!" Well, I'm going to tell you the opposite. I suggest you STOP and pivot.

If you believe in the theory of cause and effect, that things happen for a reason, you must agree that everything you have done in your past has led you here, right now where you are. So, what are you going to do with that knowledge? You probably know a different direction to go, one that is more suited to you, yet for whatever reason you continue to deny yourself the opportunity



to pursue it. If you know you need to go in a different direction to be happy, then make this change today and pivot your career and your life. Why are you choosing familiar pain over future happiness? Only you have the power to make a change for the better. Sure, we all start out our lives wanting to be successful, wealthy and loved. But we don't live in a bubble of just ourselves and our thoughts. We have to interact with other people and the world; and when that happens, things don't always work out the way we wished they would. Your goal in life is to live as long as you can and at the end of your life be able to answer the following four questions with confidence and purpose.

Did I live? Did I love? Did I matter? Did I make a difference?

Focus on making a change in the world around you and in your personal sphere of influence. If you do that, the success (and money) will follow – guaranteed!

Good Luck and Best Wishes,  
 Money Lady

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

## Cheesy Spinach Chicken Bake

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"  
 Servings: 4-6  
 2 cups chopped rotisserie chicken  
 10 ounces frozen spinach, thawed and drained  
 15 ounces ricotta cheese  
 2 cups mozzarella cheese  
 1 cup Parmesan cheese  
 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning  
 1 tablespoon garlic powder  
 1 tablespoon onion powder

1 tablespoon lemon thyme  
 Heat oven to 375 F.  
 Cut rotisserie chicken and spinach into bite-sized pieces. In baking dish, mix chicken and spinach with ricotta cheese.  
 Add mozzarella, Parmesan, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, onion powder and lemon thyme. Mix well then bake 30 minutes.

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## The Town of Winnipeg Beach GRANT APPLICATIONS

It is that time of year for the Council to commence the process of building the Towns 2026 Budget. Please contact the office or visit our website at www.winnipegbeach.ca for application packages.

Deadline for accepting Grant Applications is January 30, 2026. Late applications will not be accepted.

**Applications are to be submitted to:**

Grant Applications Town of Winnipeg Beach  
Box 160  
Winnipeg Beach, MB R0C 3G0 info@winnipegbeach.ca

## JOB OPPORTUNITY

Gimli Sobey's

### ADMINISTRATION CLERK

Full Time

*Accounting, Administration & File Maintenance Duties*

**Application Deadline December 27th**

Please send Resume to sobey.gimli@outlook.com



**RM of Armstrong**

### Sale of RM Owned Land

The RM of Armstrong invites offers to purchase certain RM of Armstrong owned land by mail or in person to 1094 PTH 17, P.O. Box 69, Inwood, MB R0C 1P0 by no later than the closing date and time noted below. All bids should be in a sealed envelope labels with the legal description of the property being bid on. To ensure everyone has the same access to the same information, all available properties can be found on the RM of Armstrong website at <https://www.rmofarmstrong.com/p/land-leases-sales>

Your offer must include a secured deposit of \$1,000.00 payable to the RM of Armstrong which will become non-refundable if accepted, or returned to you if not accepted. Cash, Debit, Money Order or a Bank Draft are accepted. The successful offeror will be notified upon acceptance. Highest or any bid not necessarily accepted, and preference will be given to block bids over individuals submissions.

Every buyer is solely responsible for its own due diligence, including required access to the lands intended for purchase, as the RM makes no representations or warranties whatsoever in that regard, now or in the future.

Please direct any inquiries to the Municipality's Chief Administrative Officer. If successful, your purchase will be handled through the RM's legal counsel.

Closing Date: January 9, 2026 at 12:00 Noon

Colleen Mayer, CAO  
RM of Armstrong  
Phone: 204-278-3377  
Email: cao@rmofarmstrong.com

**News Tips? call the Express 204-467-5836**

## WE'RE HIRING FACILITY OPERATOR 1

The RM of Gimli is looking for a full-time Facility Operator to join our Recreation Department team! Help keep our arenas, pool, and parks running smoothly - from ice installation to playground upkeep.

40 hrs/week | \$28.51 - \$29.38/hr - includes evenings & weekends

What we're looking for:

- Power Engineer (4th/5th Class), Refrigerator Class or Ice Facility Operator
- Power Engineer (4th/5th Class), Refrigerator Class or Ice Facility Operator
- Class 5 Driver's Licence
- Handy with maintenance and safety-focused

If you're skilled, reliable, and enjoy maintaining community spaces, we'd love to hear from you!

Visit [www.gimli.ca](http://www.gimli.ca) and view Employment Opportunities for the full posting.

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY



### Interlake Women's Resource Centre Executive Director - Full Time (35 hrs/week)

The Interlake Women's Resource Centre is seeking a dedicated Executive Director to oversee the overall management and direction of the Centre. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will lead daily operations, staff supervision, financial administration, program oversight, and community engagement.

#### Qualifications:

- Strong leadership, organizational, and communication skills.
- Experience in nonprofit, community services, or administration is an asset.

To apply, please submit your résumé and cover letter to [executivedirector@iwrc.ca](mailto:executivedirector@iwrc.ca).

Only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

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## IN MEMORIAM



**Florence Brown**

April 4, 1941 – December 14, 2024

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Silent the tears that fall;  
Living life without you,  
Is the hardest part of all.  
Those special years will not return,  
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## OBITUARY

**Tracey McInerney**

May 29, 1968 - November 22, 2025

The family of Tracey McInerney, of Winnipeg Beach, is sad to announce her passing on November 22, 2025, after a short battle with cancer.

Tracey is lovingly remembered by her husband, Todd Wood, her mother Beverly, her stepdaughter, Tamara (Brant) and her grandchildren, Lucy, Ryker, and Riot. Also left to mourn is Tracey's mother-in-law Jean, sisters-in-law, Tanya and Liz, brothers-in-law, Adam and Richard; as well as numerous cousins and extended family members.

Tracey was predeceased by her father, Jerry, sister Beverly, and brother Kevin.

Tracey grew up in Regina, Saskatchewan and was a Riders Fan through and through. After suffering the unimaginable loss of her sister, brother, and father within a short period of time, Tracey and her mother, Bev, formed an incredibly close bond. Bev supported Tracey and herself in any way that she could, which often included selling crafts and other handiworks. It's clear Bev was a strong influence on Tracey developing her own flare for crafting, jewelry making and DIY projects. Tracey kept the memories of her siblings and Dad close to her; she used her dad's black wallet until it fell apart.



As a young adult, Tracey ventured off to Vancouver, BC and it was there that she met the love of her life and soul mate, Todd, in 1998. Who could resist a man in a band, who drove a motorcycle and had an iguana? Tracey tamed the iguana and she and Todd began their life of adventure together. When Tracey wasn't following Todd and his band, she began her career in the helping profession. Tracey worked in the mental health field, and she and Todd also became foster parents. Tracey and Todd had a deep love and respect for the high needs children they cared in their home over the years.

Todd and Tracey moved to Manitoba to be closer to Todd's daughter, Tamara, in 2004. As a couple they planted roots in Winnipeg Beach, where they purchased a cute house near the lake. Tracey took immense pride in her home and would often complete projects while Todd was away; it was not unusual for Todd to return home from a business trip to find a room completely redone, new holes in the walls, or half completed projects. One of Tracey's most recent creations was her "she-shed" where all her creativity could flow in a girly space of her own! Tracey loved to "bedazzle" things to make them pretty, including the dash of her car, her office supplies at work and anything in between. Tracey had many talents, from home renovations to jewellery making and gardening. She also had a love for entertaining her family and friends; her deck and martini bar were always open, and she enjoyed hosting the annual August long weekend birthday celebration for Todd!

Over the years, Tracey and Todd's passion for travel took them to the Galapagos Islands, Sayulita, San Pancho, Isla Mujeres, and Cuba, among other places. They preferred smaller, quaint villages over high traffic tourist areas. It was important for them to immerse themselves in the culture and make connections with local people. During a very special trip to Huatulco, Mexico, on February 2, 2013, Tracey and Todd were married on the beach, celebrating their love with family and friends. They were adventurous travelers, experiencing everything they could during their visits. Sometimes even taking a suitcase of school supplies and clothing to support the local children.

In May 2007, after a short time as an Educational Assistant in Gimli, Tracey found the profession she was always meant to have and began her career as a social worker in the Interlake Region. She continued her dedicated work there until just a few months ago, when her health forced her to take 'a few sick days'; something Tracey rarely did. Tracey carried a yellow work bag that said, "Trust Me, I'm a Social Worker" and anyone she worked with knew they could believe that statement. Tracey arrived at each home and each meeting in her quiet, unassuming way with an open heart and not an ounce of judgement; only care, compassion, kindness and empathy. She had an incredible ability to put herself in someone else's shoes even when she had not walked the same path. Tracey was a tireless advocate for the families she worked with throughout her career, first as a child protection worker, then with foster families and more recently in her role as a Supported Guardianship worker. Tracey was quick to respond to calls from a family or community member in need and always went beyond the call of duty to be present, to help troubleshoot a problem, or provide comforting and encouraging words.

Tracey was equally supportive to her colleagues. She was the heart of the Gimli District Office and a pillar of strength and wisdom for anyone seeking guidance. Tracey always led by example and was consistently ready to listen to others; she was a sounding board for anyone who needed to talk or share a heart-warming or heart-breaking story. She was everyone's cheerleader and she wanted to be a part of making the world a better place. Tracey was very ambitious and loved doing charts, perfecting power point presentations, compiling educational tools, creating forms and she aimed to make paperwork as easy on others as possible.

Tracey brought joy to the office with her positive spirit and passion for decorating for the holidays; she would arrive early in the morning to transform the office before anyone arrived for work; Halloween and Christmas were her favourite occasions. Her buddy Dale, a life-size doll she created, was a favourite in the office; always dressed appropriately for any occasion and he even made his way to be with her at the hospital as "Nurse Dale" in her final days.

In addition to her many talents, Tracey was a fashionista. She had a hat for every occasion, with high heels and the perfect accessories to complete her look. She effortlessly put together meticulous outfits from thrift store finds. Even while doing rural child protection work, Tracey never strayed from her own personal style. Underneath her hats was often a new hairstyle or colour and even during treatment, when she lost her hair, she said she was ok with it because having no hair was a style she hadn't yet tried.

Tracey's story would not be complete without mentioning how important her friends and family were to her. Tracey took a sincere interest in their lives and well-being, offering her support and the occasional sarcastic comment, clever joke or gentle eye roll. Tracey was cautious of babies in her work life and enjoyed them from a safe distance, but she was an amazing, loving grandmother to Lucy, Ryker, and Riot. She was most of proud of these three; always ready to share a picture or story when her friends asked. Tracey's love and devotion to her husband Todd was inspirational. Their Thursday night dates were a testament to their unwavering commitment to each other.

Tracey managed her illness with the same grace and dignity with which she lived her life. Even as she was nearing the end of her journey, she was concerned about how everyone else was coping, rather than focusing on how unfair it was for cancer to steal her future. Everyone who knew Tracey, loved Tracey, and we are all better people for having her in our lives. She will be profoundly missed, forever remembered and forever loved. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date in the spring.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to your local Humane Society; Tracey's fur-babies, Fred and Nikki, held a special place in Tracey's heart and were beloved members of her family.

Tributes: www.gilbartfuneralhome.com

Gilbart Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.



**Crossword Answer**

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## OBITUARY



### Cameron "Cam" Edward Carter

It is with deep sadness that we announce the sudden passing of Cameron "Cam" Edward Carter on Sunday, November 23, 2025 at the age of 49.

Cam was born on September 13, 1976 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He grew up in the city he loved and attended Vincent Massey Collegiate. His early career included Tony's Pizza before joining a business venture at Cue Club, a place where his love for people and pool truly shined. After moving to Gimli, he worked at Brennivins Pizza Hus, owned by his close friend Dave Strachan, and also spent time commercial fishing on Lake Winnipeg.

Cam was proud to serve the community as a Volunteer Firefighter with the Gimli Fire Department. He completed firefighting courses and advanced training in Brandon and held those accomplishments close to his heart.

Most of all, Cam was proud of his career with CP Rail. He worked hard toward his goal of becoming an engineer and was actively taking courses to get there. He was genuinely excited for his future with the railway and found a strong sense of purpose in that work.

Sports played a major role in Cam's life. He loved baseball and spent many summers swinging his heart out, always ready for game day. In rec hockey and golf, he brought energy and laughter wherever he showed up. And in the pool community, Cam was a legend. There were countless unforgettable nights, big wins, and louder laughs. The pool world will never be the same without him.

His smile was infectious, and he had a way of making every moment feel bigger, brighter, and better simply by being there.

Cam was predeceased by his parents, Joyce and Bob Carter, and his half-brother Rick Neibel. He is survived by his beloved son Dillon, who was his greatest joy and purpose in life, and by Dillon's mother Crystal Collard, who remained a loyal friend and partner in cheering on Dillon's hockey journey and accomplishments. He is also survived by his sister Bonnice Iwasiuk, nephews Derek (Anita) and Kevin and their children, extended family including Lana Harrison, Russell (Trina) Neibel, and Desiree Smorhay.

Cam leaves behind an incredible group of close friends who loved him like a brother: Grant Hjørleifson, Dwayne Arnason, Dave Strachan, Grant Binda, Russell Dann, Tracey Aultman, and Blair Chudd. Their memories, stories, and laughs shared with Cam will be treasured forever.

From His Son, Dillon

Dillon was his anchor. Their connection was unbreakable. Dillon will forever cherish their trips to Vancouver and Victoria Island to see killer whales, cheering at Jets games, early summer mornings golfing together, their road trips to hockey tournaments, and long talks in the car that never ran out of things to say.

He loved their Brennivins dinner runs, beach days, campfires, late nights in the hot tub, movie nights, and traveling across Canada together. Wherever they went, being together was what mattered most.

Dillon says, "He was such a good dad. He tried to give me the world whenever he could and made me a happy kid. I loved him so much."

Cam will be remembered for his big heart, his mischievous grin, and the way he could brighten a room simply by walking into it.

A celebration of Cam's life will be announced once arrangements are finalized. Cremation has taken place, and arrangements have been entrusted to Gilbert Funeral Home in Selkirk.

Those wishing to honour Cam's memory may share their condolences and prayers through the funeral home.

"Love you Dad, always." - Dillon

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

Gilbert Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.



## OBITUARY

### Gordon Blair Danard July 26, 1962 - December 5, 2025

We are deeply saddened with the passing of Gordon Blair Danard on December 5, 2025. He was a loving husband and soulmate to Wanda together for 40 years. A dear son, brother, brother-in-law, uncle and friend.

We are forever blessed with every moment shared, every memory made, and grateful for your thoughts during this time.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to Heart and Stroke or CancerCare in hope of making a difference for generations to come.

Private celebration at a future date.

Those we love do not go away,  
They walk beside us everyday.  
Unseen, unheard, But always near,  
Still loved, still missed,  
And always dear.



### Gone Hunting

Remember the smiles and not the tears  
For all the hunts throughout the years  
Don't dwell on things left unsaid  
Cherish the memories we had instead

Like the crisp mornings and dusky nights  
A trophy buck within our sights  
Deer camp with friends and family  
These moments meant so much to me

When peace from nature all around  
Was shattered by a sudden sound  
I always hoped your aim was true  
And smiled with pride for all of you

So don't cry for me because life is done  
Stalking the fields has just begun  
Come fall may smiles adorn your face  
Knowing I've gone hunting... in a better place



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## CROSSWORD

### CLUES ACROSS

- Spiritual leaders
- A type of solution
- Fortified wine
- Edible mollusk
- They precede C
- A way to compare
- Government lawyer
- "Game of Thrones" actor Ciaran
- The eighth month (abbr.)
- Very willing
- \_\_ ex Machina
- Makes happy
- Type of berry
- A doctrine
- Popular Dodge truck model
- Dekagram
- Naturally occurring solid

- Company officer
- Villains
- Cricket frogs
- Influential German psychologist
- Endured
- A female domestic
- You can get stuck in one
- Cigarette (slang)
- Fiber optics network
- Group of blood disorders (abbr.)
- Employee stock ownership plan
- Belonging to the bottom layer
- Sound
- MLB legend Hank
- Very attractive person
- Late beloved

### sportscaster Craig

- South Dakota
  - Mocking
  - Symbol for gold
  - Longtime Braves pitcher Julio
  - Humor
  - Shawl
  - Preliminary patient assessment
- ### CLUES DOWN
- Animal disease
  - Commercial
  - Necklace material
  - Containers
  - A way to save for your future
  - Colorado Heisman winner Rashaan
  - Dipped down
  - Head injury (abbr.)
  - Lay about
  - Intestinal
  - Opposite of yes
  - Caused to be loved

### 13. Spiritual leader of Islam

- Businesslike
- Not in
- Number above the line in a fraction
- An animal with its own day
- Pouch
- Swedish krona
- Start over
- Field flowers
- Fourteen
- A visual way to interact with a computer
- Up-to-date
- Campaigns
- Touch lightly
- "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
- Violent seizure of property
- Supporter of the Pope
- Anxiety
- Body fluid

- One who's faking it
- Title of respect
- Chilean city
- City in central Japan
- Silk garment

- A form of dance
- Automobile
- The man
- Justice Dept. head honcho

**OBITUARY**



**Andrew Brian Barylski**  
June 9, 1948 – December 1, 2025

Peacefully, in the morning of December 1st, Andy passed away at Johnson Memorial Hospital in Gimli, Manitoba. He is survived by Florence, his wife of 53 years; son Kevin; daughter Karen (David); grandchildren Ava and Keifer.

Dad was born June 9, 1948 at the family home in the R.M. of Rosenberg, Manitoba. His parents were Andrzej (Andrew) and Pauline. He had six siblings: Jean (died at infancy), Edward (Anne), Joyce (Ted), Norman (Barb), Michael (Dale), Marianne (Rick) and numerous nieces and nephews.

He completed elementary school in Cochenour, Ontario, Hayek and Vidir schools and finished his high school education at Arborg Collegiate. When he lived in Ontario, where the blueberries were plentiful, Auntie Sylvia nicknamed Dad "Banjo Eyes." After graduating, he went to Balmerton, Ontario to work with his uncle

at Dell Construction, then later went to work in the mine.

He came back to Manitoba and worked in Winnipeg with the BDC Company. At a New Year's dance in Fisher Branch, he met his wife to be. Once married, the two ventured to Norway House, where they spent four years working together, having much fun with the friends they made. The stories of those days still bring smiles.

Moving back to Arborg, he worked at the Co-Op Lumber Store. The North called him back where he shared management at the hotel and he flew throughout northern Manitoba and Northern Ontario preparing Income Tax returns, until he retired. We remember one winter when Dad came home from one of his trips, the pilot landed his plane on the field across from home. Dad grabbed his bag, waved a farewell – the pilot returned to the skies and Dad walked home.

Together, Dad and Mom traveled extensively including traveling all of Canada and the United States. They took winter holidays in Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Hawaii and multiple trips to Europe.

He volunteered with the Kinsmen and for nearly two decades at the Fire Department in Arborg. He was well known for the meals he cooked at the Fire Department to ensure the volunteers were well fed after returning from a call.

Dad did so much in his life. He figured things out and was not intimidated by challenges. He could crack a joke when we least expected and was a prankster. Dad lived a very full life and had fun doing things like: driving a motorcycle, farming, snowmobiling, boating, hunting, canoeing, fly-in fishing and having a shore lunch and taking flying lessons. Surprisingly, he also had a quiet side and read.

Employment with Barrett & Sons gave him experiences, knowledge and unforgettable adventures. Thank you.

To the emergency personnel at Johnson Memorial Hospital for your compassion, thank you.

As per Dad's wishes, there will be no formal service and a private interment will be held.



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**OBITUARY**



**Angeline Krasey (nee Welchynski)**  
Date of passing November 30, 2025

With deep sadness we announce the passing of Angeline at the age of 79 at the Arborg Hospital.

Left to cherish her memory is her loving husband of 58 years Jack; daughter Jacqueline (Trevor) Krause; son Michael Krasey; daughter Sandra (late Glen) Kehler; sister Mary (late Martin) Mihalik; nieces, nephews, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, extended family and friends.

She was predeceased by her brothers Tony and Bill; sister-in-law Diane.

Angeline was a teacher prior to establishing her growing family. She enjoyed gardening, fishing and time with her family on the farm.

A graveside service was held at the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Cemetery in Meleb, Manitoba.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba. Tributes: www.gilbartfuneralhome.com

Gilbart Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.



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