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Fun and games for spring break

Emma and Madeline were among the kids who had some fun at Morden's Spring Break Day Camp last week. For a few more photos, check out Pg. 11.

PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

news > sports > opinion > community > people > entertainment > events > classifieds > careers > everything you need to know

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Industrial Eats deli to open this spring

The Bunker youth ministry renovating space to open new storefront

By Ashleigh Viveiros

There's something exciting brewing at The Bunker in Winkler.

The youth ministry has been hard at work this spring transforming space in the former Central Station part of its building at 545 Industrial Dr. to create its very own deli storefront.

"Going back about a year ago, we had a guy renting space from us making deli meats," explained executive director Kevin Hildebrand, referring to the MeatZDymkom business operating out of the commercial kitchen the ministry built for its Industrial

Eats project a few years ago.

Industrial Eats is The Bunker's catering arm, overseeing its summer food truck, canteen operations at the Winkler arena, and weekly lunchtime grab-and-go food service.

"We've started using his meats in a lot of our sandwiches, and we've expanded into doing different feature sandwiches every month," Hildebrand said, noting they sell that rotating roster of sandwiches Thursdays from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The partnership has worked so well that MeatZDymkom has become part of the Industrial Eats family.

"We've taken him on as part of Industrial Eats and so now we can have an Industrial Eats deli," Hildebrand said.

Hence the renovation project, which will provide more room for both the deli and takeout sales.

"It was getting super crowded in



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Natasha Harder, Claudia Lechner, Kevin Hildebrand, and Nancy Suderman inside the future home of Industrial Eats' new deli, slated to open later this spring in support of The Bunker youth ministry's work.

here," Hildebrand noted of the area adjacent to the kitchen where they were previously selling their food. "So we decided we've got that space over there where the dining room is going to be eventually, and it was just storage. Let's develop it, close it off a little bit so we'll have a space for coolers with all the deli meats and

whatever other stuff we might expand into, like take-home brisket ribs, pulled pork, that kind of stuff.

"We've also got a couple of ladies that are going to be doing homemade breads, cinnamon buns, cookies, desserts, all kinds of stuff like that."

Continued on page 4

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Summer is coming! Online booking for the Lake Minnewasta campground opens May 1.

morden.ca/lake-minnewasta

The Tea Party to headline Corn & Apple Festival

By Lorne Stelmach

The Corn and Apple Festival is again dipping into the rich well of Canadian rock from the 1990s for this year's main stage lineup.

It was announced last week that The Tea Party will be the headline act for the Aug. 28-30 festival.

Active especially throughout the '90s and up until 2005, the band reformed in 2011. The Tea Party has released eight albums and sold over three million records worldwide, including four double-platinum awards, one platinum, and four gold albums in Canada.

Known for their powerful blend of rock and world music influences, The Tea Party is sure to deliver a memorable show, and festival executive director Rashaad Hamid said they were very pleased to land an act of this calibre for the Saturday night stage show.

"As a community-focused festival, bringing in a band of this calibre has been something many in our community have suggested over the years, and we're thrilled to finally make it happen," he said.

"They are a well-established Canadian act with a strong reputation for outstanding live performances, and we feel they will connect very well with our core audience. From both a personal perspective and on behalf of the organization, this is shaping up to be one of the standout moments of our festival."

The festival will also have The Highway Company as the opening act that night, offering a mixture of Americana rock.

Hamid said he feels this is a continuation of what has proven to be very successful for the festival in the past few years.

"Building on the momentum of recent years, including strong turnouts and major performances like The Big Wreck in 2022, the festival continues to grow in both scale and ambition. This announcement reflects that continued progress," he suggested.

"We are also working behind the scenes on a bunch of other stuff, with more announcements to come as details are confirmed. The best way for the community to stay up to date is by following our social media channels



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The Tea Party will anchor the Saturday night main stage lineup at the Morden Corn and Apple Festival this summer.

and subscribing to our newsletter."

Hamid also made an appeal for continued support from the community.

"We want to emphasize that as the festival continues to grow, so do the associated costs of delivering high-quality programming. We are deeply grateful for the support we re-

ceive, and we continue to encourage local businesses and community partners to consider the festival as their own, stepping forward as sponsors to help us keep expanding and bringing more exciting experiences to the region for years to come."

Winkler chamber announces business award winners

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Winkler's best in business have been announced.

The Winkler and District Chamber of Commerce last week named the recipients of the P.W. Enns Business Awards.

ONE Insurance Group is this year's Customer Service Award winner, King's Deli Market & Eatery will take home the Business Builder Award, Golden West Broadcasting Ltd. won the Community Builder Award, the Non-Profit of the Year is Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pembina Valley, and the Business Excellence Award is going to Schnell Industries Inc.

"Looking at their accomplishments and according to the criteria that we have for our award categories, these five winners really stood out," shared Tanya Chateauf, chamber executive director, "and we thought they definitely deserved recognition for all of their hard work and accomplishments."

Business Excellence winner Schnell Industries has grown in leaps in bounds in recent years.

The equipment manufacturer for the

agricultural, industrial, and bulk materials handling industries has seen its staff numbers triple from 32 in 2021 to 95 this year. They doubled their facility in Winkler's industrial park with

Continued on page 6

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Tickets on sale now for SCCR fashion show

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Tickets are on sale now for South Central Cancer Resource's annual fashion show.

Tickets to the May 14 fundraiser went live first thing Tuesday morning, and they're expected to go fast.

The popular event made the move



VOICE FILE PHOTO

SCCR's Building Bridges Fashion Show takes place at the Meridian Exhibition Centre May 14.

from Morden to Winkler's Meridian Exhibition Centre last year, to great success.

"We had just over 300 seats in Morden and now we're shooting for 500," says event committee member Cali Suderman. "We needed a bigger space ... but it was definitely a shot in the dark. There were, I think, only eight seats left last year."

Dubbed the Building Bridges Fashion Show, the evening will shine a spotlight on how one is never alone as they navigate a cancer journey.

"With a cancer diagnosis, you're now looking at building a bridge," Suderman says, explaining that each slat represents the community helping you get through it all.

"Within SCCR, we have our drivers that will help get you to treatments, that's one slat. And you've got your nurse navigators that are helping coordinate your treatments. That's another slat. You've got your church, your friends, your family, doctors—they all build up another slat."

The hope is that you'll walk that bridge together and come out the other side healthy again.

"You get up over the hump of

your treatment and get back down to where you're standing on solid ground," Suderman says, noting "it's a tough bridge to walk" but the journey is made a little easier when you have all these people you can lean on.

The evening will feature a rainbow auction, wine bar, desserts, and a panel discussion highlighting some of the

services SCCR provides free of charge to local cancer patients.

"We're going to have a volunteer driver and one of our office coordinators who organizes all the drivers, all the trips," Suderman says, noting the region they serve is massive.

Continued on page 6

> THE BUNKER, FROM PG. 2

The hope is to have the deli side of things up and running by the end of April.

The future dining room Hildebrand referred to is part of the long term plan for the non-profit to open a sit-down restaurant whose profits will help keep The Bunker sustainable.

They intend to hire marginalized community members who need a more supportive work environment, with flexible work shifts and a culture of mentorship and understanding.

That dream has hit a few financial hurdles in recent years, forcing them to push pause on the idea, for now.

"That is still the end dream, but we're like \$300,000 away from finishing everything up in there," Hildebrand said. "So we are trying to figure out how we can raise that money. We're still actively fundraising towards that, so if people want to donate to that project and get us that \$300,000 quicker, that would be awesome."

In the meantime, the new deli will also employ local youth, just as Industrial Eats does with its canteen and food truck teams.

"We've got three working here right now, and during the year we had 19 working at the concession booth," Hildebrand said. "That has just been a super good opportunity to test out our model of taking kids that nobody else wants to hire and see if we can train and develop and teach them what they need to know to succeed."

"These kids don't feel they fit in the community, they don't fit in the workplace, but they come here and they're out in the community and they fit and they love it and they thrive and grow and learn."

Heading up that program is Natasha Harder, who has seen numerous youth make great strides over the past year.

"A couple of them in particular have definitely shown a lot of im-

provement from their start until now," she said, noting several have plans to come with at The Bunker's food trucks this summer. "They are proof that if you just give them a chance, show them some love, they can make a big difference."

Harder will be heading up staff management at the deli alongside kitchen manager Nancy Suderman. With this core team helping keep things running smoothly, Industrial Eats is expanding its hours of operations starting April 17.

"We'll be open Thursdays and Fridays 11:30-1:30 and then Friday evenings and Saturday evenings from 4:30-7:30 for supper," Suderman said, noting it'll be takeout food, though once the weather warms up they'll have picnic tables outside people can come eat at.

You might also soon see another food truck on the road with the Industrial Eats logo on it sometime soon.

"We had someone donate a second food trailer to us," Hildebrand shared, noting it'll be ready to hit the streets "as soon as we have the money to finish it."

"We started this whole self-sustainability thing with our first food trailer, and if we hadn't started that when we did, we would have shut down by now," he said. "I've been here for 20 years and our expenses have only gone up, but very few of our donations have gone up. We have to find ways to keep it all going."

"Any profits that we make out of all this goes back into The Bunker, and then we can do all the programming, the mission trips, everything," Hildebrand said, thanking everyone who has supported their efforts, either by making a donation or simply buying lunch from them.

"With these kids, we do make a difference, and they need this," added Suderman, encouraging the community to continue its support "so we can keep helping these kids."



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Morden's Imagination Library launches Monday

By Ashleigh Viveiros

It's official: Morden's Imagination Library is a go. A committee made up of reps from the Morden Family Resource Centre (MFRC), Western School Division, and South Central Regional Library has raised the funds it needs to launch the early childhood literacy program next week.

"We are opening for registrations on Monday, April 13 at 10 a.m.," shared MFRC executive director Jen Froese. "We're initially going to open it up to 100 kids, one per family to start, and then hopefully through the next few months we'll raise more funds to be able to accept more kids per family."

The Imagination Library is an international program founded by country music superstar Dolly Parton. Local chapters mail out free books to registered kids every month from the time they're born until they turn five, helping families build up their home libraries and fostering in kids a lifelong love of reading.

The money they've raised so far will cover sending books to the first 100 kids for the next two years, but organizers are certainly hoping to grow the program far beyond that.

"We raised what we need to launch it, but we still need more to keep it going through the years and accept more kids," Froese said. "It's a start, but we definitely have a few hundred more children that would be eligible."

Much of this first \$10,000 came from a handful of generous community donors, so Froese is hoping to get the word out about this program to as many more potential supporters as possible.

"We are really encouraging smaller businesses, larg-



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Some of the free books children enrolled in Morden's new Imagination Library program will receive. Registration opens Monday at 10 a.m. Scan the QR code above to find the website.

er businesses to get on board, maybe with a payroll deduction program, if this is something that they're passionate about and that their employees are passionate about, because every dollar counts."

It costs just \$45 to cover books and mail costs for one child for one year, Froese noted.

"It's not a huge investment," she said. "So if there are any business that want to jump on board

and support it, we'd love to hear from them."

Donations can also be made online at imaginationlibrary.com/ca/affiliate/MBMORDEN, which is the same website to go Monday morning to register your child for the program.

They will be accepting children born in July 2021 or later who live in the Western School Division catchment area.

Applications open for Learn & Return bursary

By Lorne Stelmach

An initiative aimed at helping support the education and training of health care practitioners and in turn encourage them to work and serve in this area has been paying off.

The Learn and Return Health Care Bursary is still a relatively new initiative, but organizers already know it works—12 employees who have received it are currently working at Boundary Trails Health Centre.

The dream of the initiative's proponents, including Marilyn Skubovius and Pat Gibson, is that in the future staffing for health care would not be a problem in this area of the province.

"The whole concept of when it was initiated was Boundary Trails Health Centre is expanding, and they're going to need new staff for different programming, and what did everybody say? We already don't have enough staff, so how are you going to open any new programs?" recalled Gibson.

They took the idea for the bursary to the Morden Area Foundation, and it immediately recognized the value of it and helped them create an endowment fund so donations to it could give back in perpetuity.

"We then literally just went from business to business, interested party to interested party, and the rest is history," Gibson said.

The bursary fund is now at just under \$700,000 thanks in large part to a \$500,000 contribution from Dave Lumgair in memory of his wife. Their goal is to reach \$1 million.

Applications are now being accepted for 2026 with a deadline of May 15. There will be \$26,500 to distribute this year.

Over the past two years they've given out 36 bursaries to residents from Morden, Winkler, Stanley, Miami, Altona, and Hochfield pursuing careers as doctors, nurses, pharmacists,

Continued on page 8



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> FASHION SHOW, FROM PG. 4

"It's Winkler, Morden, Pilot Mound—everything from Morris south, basically—so these coordinators are working ridiculous hours with unbelievable numbers of people," says Suderman. "It's just to kind of give people an idea of these are the people involved in building your bridge, here's what that looks like."

Models walking the runway that night will be wearing fashions and accessories from Livienne Bridal Boutique, Copper & Sparrow Boutique, Knockabouts, Saban & Company, Amorakin, Focal Point, and Appelts Diamonds.

"All of the models are either walking in honour of someone—either someone that has passed or a family member that's currently battling cancer—or they're walking for themselves," Suderman says. "Each of them is going to have a bit of their story told: this is my journey and this is how SCCR was able to help."

"Their stories deserve to be shared and they deserve to be listened to. It's a very emotional evening, but it's beautiful," she says, adding it's also an evening full of hope, with stories of people overcoming cancer and going on to live long, healthy lives. "We've got a model who's been 40 years cancer free ... there are stories where [a cancer battle] is just a blip on their radar."

The event is SCCR's biggest fundraiser of the year. Last year's show set a new record with over \$77,000 raised.

The funds go to support SCCR's programming, which includes its patient transportation service, accommodation assistance, wigs and head coverings, skin screening clinics, lymphedema financial assistance, radon awareness and testing, and a variety of wellness programs aimed at helping those living with cancer feel better, mentally, emotionally, and physically.

"We in the Pembina Valley are so blessed to have SCCR," Suderman says. "There are programs outside of this area where your enrolment is not free. With SCCR, you come in our doors and your costs are covered, no questions asked. You qualify because you live here and it is funded by our communities."

In fact, the agency receives no gov-

ernment funding for its services—it's all supported through donations.

"It's a testament to how the Pembina Valley looks after one another," Suderman says. "We just open our arms

and say let's get you through this." Tickets to the May 14 show, which starts at 7 p.m., are \$65 and are available online at sccr.mb.ca.

> CHAMBER AWARDS, FROM PG. 3

an expansion in 2022 and added another 41,000 square feet with a new build on their site just last year to keep pace with their expanding customer markets on the national and international stages.

"They were selected for Business Excellence, which is our biggest award of the night, in recognition of all the growth that they've shown" Chateaufeuf said, as well as the contributions they've made to community groups and projects ranging from Adult and Teen Challenge to the Plum Coulee Fire Department.

The other award winners are no less accomplished.

"If we look at King's Deli as a Business Builder, we can look at their expansion into Morden but also their expansion of what they offer the community as far as their catering, their events, how they contribute to the community," Chateaufeuf said. "We're just so proud to have them as chamber members."

Golden West Broadcasting, meanwhile, is nearing 70 years of news and advertising services in the community.

"All of the different things that they offer the business community as well as the community as a whole makes them a perfect fit for the Community Builder Award," Chateaufeuf said. "And we're super excited to celebrate with them and to recognize what they do for us."

ONE Insurance Group's focus on building long-term relationships

with their clients to ensure they are providing them with the support they need when they need it made them a fine fit for the Customer Service Award.

"Here we have a business that really goes above and beyond, and I think it's a wonderful opportunity for us to say thank you for providing such a great service," said Chateaufeuf.

Finally, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pembina Valley had been facilitating mentoring matches between volunteers and youth for 50 years.

"Every non-profit in our community plays an important role, and we're so excited to highlight the role Big Brothers Big Sisters plays," Chateaufeuf said.

These five organizations will be celebrated at the P.W. Enns Awards Gala on May 12 at the Meridian Exhibition Centre.

The evening will include a cocktail reception starting at 5 p.m. followed by dinner and the awards ceremony.

It's a gala evening that the entire community is invited to come enjoy.

"We want to come together as a community and celebrate these amazing businesses that we have here in Winkler," said Chateaufeuf.

Tickets are \$150, plus tax, and can be booked online at winklerchamber.com/events or by emailing admin@winklerchamber.com.

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Please keep your letters short (excessively long letters are less likely to be published), on-topic, and respectful.

The *Voice* reserves the right to edit, condense, or reject any submission.

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From Winkler to Ukraine

Shipping container full of food, clothes arrives on the front lines in Zaporizhzhia

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The work and generosity of local volunteers and donors is making a difference half a world away.

In mid-December, Southman Gleaners in Reinland, Faith Mission in Winkler, and Mission Eurasia Canada teamed up to send a shipping container filled with dried soup mix and clothing to those in need in Ukraine.

The Russian invasion of the country caused the container to take a bit more of a circuitous route than first expected, shared Winkler's Martin Harder, board chair of Mission Eurasia Canada.

"It was coming through Odessa, and the bombs were flying around Odessa, so we weren't sure how it was going to work," he shared. "Eventually it made it through the port in Odessa but where they were originally destined for, which was a warehouse in Poland for distribution to Ukraine, that road was blocked, so they couldn't take it there."

The shipment finally made its way to Zaporizhzhia, a Ukrainian city with deep ties to southern Manitoba.

"When we started with this thing in the first place, my first thought was I hope we get it to Zaporizhzhia, because that's where our Mennonite people came from. So it was my hope and my prayer that at least some of it would get there. Well, now the whole container got there."

The soup within came courtesy of Southman Gleaners, which transforms unmarketable vegetables into shelf-stable mixes that require only water to feed 100 people, while Faith Mission provided the gently used clothing from its stockpile of donations collected in support of both Ukraine and Moldova.

Volunteers from Sixteen13 Ministry also lent a hand in this initiative, helping to get it all packed up and ready to go.

"The Ukrainian refugees who came to help us load it up, for them it



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Southman Gleaners, Faith Mission, and Mission Eurasia Canada teamed up just before Christmas to fill a shipping container with locally-sourced soup mix (above) and clothing donations for shipment to Ukraine. It arrived there a few weeks ago and the items within are getting to the people who need them.

was equally as meaningful," Harder shared. "For them to be able to contribute, even if not financially, but just to physically contribute to the welfare of their own people, that spoke huge

volumes." Mission Eurasia took care of the costs and shipment details to get it all where it could do the most good.

Continued on page 8



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> WINKLER TO UKRAINE, FROM PG. 7

"The need there is huge because it is on the front line of this conflict," Harder noted. "Families are broken up because of all the soldiers that have to go and fight, and so you have the rest of the family at home trying to fend for themselves."

The shipment arrived in late February and the goods have been rapidly distributed by partners on the

ground in the Ukraine over the past few weeks.

"Thank you so much for your efforts in finding and sending humanitarian aid to Ukraine," Roman Rakhuba, a leader in the affected area, said in a message to Mission Eurasia supporters last week. "This is incredibly important to us. Food is currently in short supply. Our teams are working



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Clothing donations collected by Faith Mission being distributed in Ukraine.



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hard to distribute the aid as efficiently as possible, and the majority of the containers have been distributed to people living near the front lines."

"This isn't about receiving random handouts; it's about restoring a vital piece of personhood," the ministry shared in its report on the distribution efforts. "Here, individuals are empowered to choose garments that fit, that suit the season, that resonate with their own style, and that they will genuinely use."

"For many, this simple act rekindles a lost sense of dignity, a flicker of normalcy in lives upended by conflict."

The food was equally welcomed, helping families put food on the table during challenging economic times.

"It might seem like a small offering in the grand scheme of a war-torn region, a humble packet of dried ingredients," the agency noted, sharing, however, that for those receiving the soup mixes, it's a profoundly uplift-

ing gift, "a tangible touch of care, a whisper from far across the world reminding them that they were not forgotten in their difficulties, that their struggles were seen. It offered a moment of reprieve, a gentle 'disconnection' from the relentless weight of their daily anxieties."

Seeing the photos of the distribution of the goods and hearing stories of their impact made all the work behind getting the container filled and shipped more than worth it, observed Harder.

"It's a feeling of elation ... what we actually did here is helping people and we have the reports, we have the pictures," he said. "When those pictures came in, it was just overwhelming to be able to say, yes, it worked."

And it was a real community effort across multiple ministries, Harder noted.

"We're all part of a big puzzle. And this puzzle now has a picture."

Spring thaw is underway; stay off lakes, rivers

By Voice staff

The snow of recent weeks may have you thinking otherwise, but spring is most certainly on its way.

Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure's Hydrologic Forecast Centre advised last week that the spring thaw has begun in southern Manitoba basins, including the United States' portion of the Red River basin.

They warn that, as temperatures rise, river flows and water levels are expected to gradually increase, leading to potentially hazardous ice conditions on rivers, lakes and drainage

ditches across the province.

"Ice may appear similar to normal winter conditions but may be very thin and unable to support people or heavy objects such as snowmobiles and vehicles," the centre's bulletin stresses. "Use of the rivers, lakes, waterways and drainage ditches for activities such as skiing, sledding and snowmobiling could be hazardous at this time and should be avoided. People living near waterways should be especially careful to prevent children and pets from wandering onto the ice."

> LEARN AND RETURN, FROM PG. 5

speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and in medical records and MRI technology.

Gibson noted it was especially gratifying to get an applicant wanting to be an MRI technician, as they are harder to come by. They're also thrilled to have supported three medical doctors, with one for certain already committed to continuing as a family practitioner in the area.

Joel Nelson, director of health services at BTHC, and Nicole Walske, director of Menzies Medical Centre, serve on the fund's committee alongside Gibson and Skubovius and a representative of the Morden

Area Foundation.

Nelson and Walske are especially valuable, Gibson noted, as they can identify the greatest needs in staffing, so those needs can be considered when giving out bursaries.

Gibson emphasized that anyone who lives in the catchment area of BTHC and is working at or would like to work at BTHC or the Menzies Medical Centre is eligible to apply.

"I am really looking forward to seeing the applicants," she said. "It's open even to anyone who's currently working but wants to advance their skills, and it's also open to immigrants who need to be re-certified to work here."

U of M health-care students supporting care in Morden-Winkler

By Lorne Stelmach

Municipal partnerships help to support the training of a variety of students in a variety of health care fields, including right here in the Pembina Valley.

Students from the University of Manitoba's Rady Faculty of Health Sciences travel to Morden and Winkler for rural and remote work placements in fields including medicine, nursing, pharmacy, rehabilitation sciences and dentistry.

Boundary Trails is among the top five locations where students complete these placements, and the City of Morden was the first to provide dedicated housing for students in launching a pair of two-bedroom units in November 2025.

The Rady faculty has a lease with the city at a low rate where they cover a portion of the cost alongside the university.

"What's really unique is that Morden has really stepped up in engaging with learners and communicating with them while they are in the community and inviting them to local events and trying to get them involved in the community so that they feel they are part of the community," said Melissa Balness, managing director, office of rural and remote learner experiences, with the Rady Faculty.

"It's a good project and one that I feel is beneficial not just for Morden but for the whole region," said Jason Dyck, economic development officer for the City of Morden.

Lindsey Gundrum, a fourth-year midwifery student, says the program has been a huge help as she completes her studies.

"It's been really nice not having to worry about accommodations when I came here for my placement and having that all arranged for me has been great," she said. "And they pay for it, and they pay for my travel too, which is really nice as a student."

Gundrum just finished her clinical placement in Winkler, and she said it was a great experience working here with the local midwifery team.

"My experience specifically with the midwives in Winkler has by far been my best experience I would say of all of my clinical placements," said Gundrum, who also spent time in Winnipeg, Brandon, and The Pas.

Having grown up on a farm just outside of Swan Lake, this area feels a little more like home to her.

"I'm definitely more familiar with the area and the culture," Gundrum said. "And the team here just works so well together. It is such a good team of midwives ... all of the staff

here has just been so great, so it's been a wonderful experience for me.

"Boundary Trails is actually one of the smaller hospitals that I've been in, and I just actually enjoy the size of the hospital where you know the doctors, who's going to be on call, and you know all the nurses by name ... so it's been great."

The initiative started in 2021 with the aim to get more students into rural communities and remove some of the financial barriers, noted Balness.

"What we've noticed over the years is how the program has grown," she said, pointing out that this past year alone saw over 2,100 learners spend time outside Winnipeg compared to just 500 when it began.

Balness shared that 579 of the learners were in the Southern Health-Santé Sud region, including 141 who have come to the Winkler and Morden area.

"So it has grown quite a bit over the last five years ... a large number of learners are going to the communities," she said.

"If learners don't have any experience in a rural community, if they grew up in an urban centre, they don't know what's available out there," Balness noted. "Communities weren't even aware that learners were in their communities, so in the past year, we have spent a lot of time meeting with community leadership across Manitoba and sharing information.

"Working with them can help ensure our program can continue, and we're also working with them to engage with the learners in their communities so that the learners have a positive experience and will want to go back to those communities poten-



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Midwifery student Lindsey Gundrum in front of Boundary Trails Health Centre, where she's completing practical portions of her training.

tially to work there in the future."

Dyck felt it was a great opportunity for the city to play an important supportive role by working in partnership through the Morden Community Development Corporation.

"The potential to directly support people in the medical profession coming here seemed like a pretty easy program to jump on board with ...

it's something we definitely wanted to support," he said.

"Retention of health care professionals and recruitment of health care professionals has

been a priority now for a number of years ... so to come up with something that is a nice place for these students to call home for between three weeks and three months that they would be doing their placements and to welcome them into the community seemed like a natural fit."

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arts & culture

'Moving Blue' and 'Outside the Lines' on now at WAC

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Winkler Arts and Culture's spring exhibition features the work of not just one but two talented local artists.

Painter Sylke van Niekerk's *Moving Blue* exhibition is joined in the main gallery by pieces by woodworker D.S. Rachul in a display dubbed *Outside the Lines*.

"We did a show together in Winnipeg last year and I really liked the combination of the wood with the paintings," shared van Niekerk. "I think the wood calms my paintings and my paintings enhance the wood sculptures, in a way."

In pulling together her contributions to the exhibition, van Niekerk was struck by the prevalence of the colour blue in her work.

"I noticed when I looked at my paintings, there was blue in every one, blue or its many hues," she said. "Blue, it never stands still. It's the colour of the ocean and it's full of good

energy, it has a calming effect, and it also connects on a deep emotional level. I'm always drawn to this colour, I cannot help it."

Van Niekerk's paintings are done in acrylics, layered to create a real sense of depth. Many of her pieces offer an abstract view of the world drawn from deep within herself.

"You dive into your emotional state ... and just kind of try to feel it deeper and connect to the emotion, if you can," she explained. "And then you grab your paint and choose your painting and then start to play. That's what I do: I really play."

She uses a number of different techniques and tools to bring her mind's eye to the canvas, which run the gamut from small, intimate pieces to giant ones.

The process is very much a baring of one's soul, van Niekerk observed.

"It makes me vulnerable. It's me, it's part of me," she said. "It's very freeing. It's also intense".

While she may have been feeling a certain emotion while creating a piece, she hopes viewers come to her work with a willingness to



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Sylke van Niekerk with one of the paintings she has on display at Winkler Arts and Culture this month as part of her *Moving Blue* exhibition.

feel whatever may come up as they look at any given painting.

"Come with an open mind," she urged. "Come willing to connect or see what you want to see and just enjoy the feeling."



'EVERY PIECE IS UNIQUE'

For Rachul, there's something profoundly satisfying about finding the unique beauty in the materials he uses to create his art.

"Every time I take a piece of wood, that is already a unique piece—there is no other piece like it, as it's from the tree," he reflected on his process of transforming old stumps into both functional and artistic works of art. "Despite the number of pieces here, every one of them is different."

"It's what keeps me motivated to try and do a new piece, because every piece of wood has its own character and flaws and qualities," Rachul continued. "Sometimes you discover things you didn't know were there, rot or whatever, and you just work around it, and most of the time those are the best pieces."

Outside the Lines features a myriad of hardwood lamps, stools, bookshelves, and vases, all made by Rachul since he picked up woodworking a couple of years ago.

"I found it very therapeutic," he

shared. "By the time I'm done with a piece, I've handled it for so long. I've had my hands on it and I've had it in front of my face for hours. I've seen it go from a rough piece of wood through the stages, through all the awkward phases where I don't even want to leave it because I don't like it sitting there unfinished."

By the time he's finally ready to call a piece truly done, it can be a challenge to let it go, but he does enjoy sharing his work with others, knowing it's finding a place in their homes.

"You'll be sitting in your home and suddenly it'll catch your eye and you go, wow, it fits. It fits in this home," he said, noting his pieces are a reflection of the natural world, a reposing of wood that might otherwise find its way to a fire pit but is instead given new life as "a piece of nature that can really add to our living spaces."

Moving Blue and *Outside the Lines* will remain up at the gallery through May 9.



D.S. Rachul transforms wood into works of functional art. His *Outside the Lines* show is also on at the gallery this month.

PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Check out the Voice online at www.winklormordenvoice.ca or altonavoiced.ca

Candlewick bringing 'Fools' to the stage

By Lorne Stelmach

Candlewick Productions is dipping into a rich well of lighthearted and comedic works for its upcoming play.

The theatre troupe is bringing Neil Simon's *Fools* to the stage at the Kenmor Theatre in Morden April 17-18, with funds from the production going to help support improvements at the historic building.

"This one kind of ticks all the right boxes," suggested director Richard Klassen. "It's fun, it's energetic, and there's lots of comedy in the piece, and it's something for the whole family."

There will be a lot of the usual suspects in the cast along with a few other new faces.

"There's a good variety," said Klassen. "Overall, I've got a lot of actors who have been involved in different shows over the years ... this may be the first time that all of them have worked together with each other."

He noted there is a newcomer in Jim Robson, while Joel and Erin Klassen are playing the doctor and his wife, and Bailey Zacharias is getting back into theatre with the leading role of Leon.

"It's been a few years since he has been on stage, but he's making his

comeback, so that's great," said Klassen.

Set in the late 19th-century Ukrainian village of Kulyenchikov where the entire community has been cursed with chronic stupidity for 200 years, the story follows Leon Tolchinsky, a schoolteacher hired to educate Sophia Zubritsky, the daughter of the town doctor.

As Leon attempts to break the curse, he falls in love with Sophia, but the only way to break the curse is to educate her, which proves impossible.

"The play explores themes of folly versus wisdom, the impact of education and the role of love in breaking free from ignorance," said Klassen. "*Fools* is a whimsical fable that has been performed in various regional and international revivals for its family-friendly appeal."

Jeff Franz plays a character named Snetzky, and he was drawn to be involved in this play because it was one he had previously had a crack at when it was put on by the Garden Valley Collegiate drama group.

"I really, really enjoyed it, so when I heard that Richard might be doing it again, I instantly thought I wanted to do it," said Franz.

He noted Neil Simon was an excellent playwright, and his plays have



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Candlewick brings Neil Simon's *Fools* to the stage in Morden April 17-18.

lasting appeal, even though he apparently didn't think *Fools* was his best work.

Franz's role as a shepherd who cannot find his sheep was a good fit for him.

"He's doing his very best to find the one thing that he is supposed to be doing," he said. "I had enough going on right now that I didn't have room for something that was going to be too much time. It's a relatively light play. It's quick; it's written well ... and my character has just enough scenes that it's going to be a lot of fun."

And Franz expressed his admiration for the cast and how there are so many talented people to draw on in this area.

"We have an excellent cast," he said,

citing the example of Zacharias especially having a big task.

"Bailey playing Leon has an enormous amount of work to do. He's on stage almost the whole show, and he's just doing a fabulous job."

Candlewick last month featured the local bands The Bare Yogis and the Brian Jacob's Band as part of the series of fundraisers for the Kenmor. Further down the road, on June 12, there will be a show by comedian Matt Falk.

Tickets are available via e-mail to tickets@candlewick.ca with a specific request along with your name and contact. You can also go online to www.candlewick.ca/take-a-seat-fundraising-events, or call the box office at 204-822-7469.



Left: Frankie and Fern try their hand at table tennis last Tuesday afternoon during the Spring Break Day Camp at the Access Event Centre in Morden. Right: Carter concentrates on his pottery painting the next day. The week also included a tour of the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre on Thursday.

PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE



Spring break fun

Soaring high

The spring raptor migration is well underway, with bald eagles becoming a more common sight all over the Pembina Valley region as a result.




PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE


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PCAN hosting Earth Day celebration April 18

By Lorne Stelmach

Mordenites are invited to mark Earth Day by coming out to the new trail area at Lake Minnewasta for a variety of outdoor activities.

The Pembina Climate Action Network is planning a number of things on the south side of Lake Minnewasta Saturday, April 18 between 1-4 p.m.

It is a change from last year when the organization held a sustainability fair indoors.

“This felt like a better way to go,” said organizer Edith Lovatt. “We wanted to bring it all closer to people and especially bring it outside.”

The afternoon will feature volunteer Doug Kelso speaking on an initiative to transplant some prairie grasses from an area near Morden that was set to be developed.

There will also be some children’s activities, and a City of Morden representative will touch on Morden being declared a Bee City. Organizers were also hoping to have someone speaking about birding for beginners, and there are also plans in the works to show how people how they can build their own seedling pots out of newspaper.

Lovatt suggested there are more and more people in the area who feel strongly about being more environmentally conscious.

“We have a group of people who are just passionate especially about the tall grasses especially, passionate about the trees,” she said. “There’s people who are becoming more aware of looking after the environment ... and we just have to find more ways in our own community of how to do that.”

And it is important to educate people about what they can do to make a difference—everything from recycling more to planting your own garden.

“What are all the little things that we can do that might make an impact in our area,” Lovatt said. “We can help make people more aware of the little things that they can do.”

The Pembina Climate Action Network is a grassroots community organization with a commitment to action and reflection regarding climate change, and it aims to do this through education regarding climate change and how to mitigate and adapt to its effects, networking with community groups/organizations and government bodies and encouraging an active reciprocal relationship with the earth.

In recent years, PCAN has also been involved with Arbor Day events in Morden, and it has also connected with Morden Collegiate students on outdoor education.

You can stay up-to-date on their activities online at pembinacan.org.

The **Voice**

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sports & recreation

Local runner lacing up for Boston Marathon

By Lorne Stelmach

A Winklerite has achieved what is likely the pinnacle for anyone who is an avid runner.

Dwight Suderman will be among the 30,000 people who will be taking part in the 130th Boston Marathon April 30, and it is an ultimate achievement for the 68-year-old.

“That’s definitely a bucket list thing for me and many marathon runners. It’s probably the foremost and one of the premier marathons in the world,” said Suderman. “It’s definitely the oldest marathon in the world.”

Even just getting to qualify for a chance to compete in the Boston Marathon itself is a feat.

“It’s based on your time in a previous race ... like the Manitoba Marathon or the Twin Cities Marathon, which is the one where I actually qualified in 2024,” Suderman said.

For his age category —male 65 to 69—he had to run a 4:05 time to qualify; he managed to run the Minneapolis event in three hours and 56 minutes.

“It wasn’t a guarantee that I was going to get in, though,” he noted. “I still had to apply, but I had a good feeling that I was going to get in ... that was quite a highlight for me.”

Suderman has been a devoted runner for most of his adult life.

“It is something I had actually dreamt of for decades ... I wondered how am I ever going to get there?” he said. “I was an accountant, and I did income tax in spring, and that’s when the Boston Marathon is, so while I was working, there was going to be no way I would be able to get there, so thank goodness I retired. Now I have the time and the ability to get there.”

In recent weeks, Suderman has been putting in the time to seriously train and prepare for the event.

“Because the Boston Marathon course is hilly, you have to look for hilly terrain to train on,” he said. “So I’ve been fortunate enough that we went to Barbados in February and a bit of March, so I was able to run up and down hills there.

“Once I came back, I’ve gone to Morden to train on their hills like Conner Hill Drive and up Hwy. 3 going west out of town,” he said. “So it’s coming together. The hills don’t seem to impact me as much as if I didn’t train on hills.”

On one recent Monday he did 19 miles between Morden and Winkler, and he was planning to do another 20 miles or so before heading to Boston.

“I’ve done quite a few runs that are in the 10 to 12 mile range, and in Barbados I ran a 14 miler, a 16 miler,” he said. “I think I will be in half decent shape.

“Boston is a hilly course,” he reiterated. “If you look at the elevation map, it doesn’t look too bad for the first half. It’s mostly downhill for the first half of the race ... then starting at mile 16, you get some major hills going uphill, and the worst one is at mile 21, and that one is called ‘heartbreak hill’, so it’s probably well named.”

Regardless of how he does in the marathon, Suderman is going to fully enjoy and appreciate the opportunity and the experience of it.

“I’m in pretty good shape injury wise. I’ve got a little bit of an achilles tendon issue ... they’re minor, so I can run through that,” he concluded. “It’s going to be a big highlight for me. Hopefully, everything goes well, and I’m shooting for a four hour time, so hopefully I can do it.”



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Dwight Suderman has qualified to compete in the Boston Marathon at the end of the month. It’s the fulfilment of a longtime dream for the Winklerite.

PV Orioles open spring tryouts, eager for season ahead

By Lorne Stelmach

There are high hopes for the new Manitoba Junior Baseball League season that lays ahead for the Pembina Valley Orioles.

The team began their tryouts last week, and while there is always some turnover on the roster, coach Bobby Matuszewski thinks there is good potential.

“We’ve got a lot of guys who graduated from AAA last year moving up now to the junior team ... and there’s also only two players who graduated from this team last year,” he noted.

“It’s tough to say what the roster may look like right now,” Matuszewski said. “I think there’s a good core of players to work with ... we should

have some good pieces. The team had a pretty good young core last year.”

Pembina Valley finished third in the regular season last summer on a 17-13 record behind the league-leading Elmwood Giants and Carillon Sultans.

After taking down the sixth-place Winnipeg South Wolves in the opening round of the play-offs, the Orioles had a tough semi-final battle with the first-place Giants. After dropping the first two games of the best-of-five series by scores of 8-1 and 10-9, Pembina Valley rebounded with 9-3 and 6-5 wins before dropping the final one 9-2.

Continued on page 14

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“We were contenders”

By Ashleigh Viveiros

It wasn't how they'd have preferred to end their season in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League, but Winkler Flyers head coach and general manager Matthew Melo says the guys have plenty to be proud of nonetheless.

The Flyers' championship hopes were dashed last month when the Niverville Nighthawks made a clean sweep of their best-of-seven quarterfinal series. The number one team in the MGEU East Division downed Winkler, who finished fourth, by scores of 8-2, 2-1, 3-2, and 4-0 to advance to the next round.

“We got off to a poor start night one,” Melo said, reflecting, however, that the team bounced back in games two and three. “Those I feel could have gone either direction, but then game four I thought we gave in a little bit.

“Ultimately, I think there were lots of good things in this series,” he said. “I didn't feel like at five-on-five we gave them a whole lot. They scored quite a bit off the rush but in our D-zone they didn't create a lot offensively.

“We kind of minimized chances at five-on-five, apart from maybe some rush play, and most of that happened in game one. So I thought we were right in there.”

Even in Niverville's 4-0 win that final night, the Flyers were still out

there outshooting the Nighthawks 38-27.

“Losing the series at 4-0, people at first glance can look at it and think it was a huge mismatch, but I think we pushed them, specifically in games two and three,” Melo said. “But, yeah, they were strong. They played well. They were coached well and they certainly deserved to win and beat us.”

The Flyers' coaching staff now turns its attention to preparing for the next campaign. Their spring development camp is coming up fast, May 1-3.

“That'll be the first step in the off-season, and right now we're heavily recruiting and really just trying to focus on how we want to build our culture,” Melo said.

“I would say this year was a real learning lesson for me,” he observed. “I think our team got to a spot where we were contenders, but I think we're missing some key pieces in terms of culture. Game four certainly didn't sit super well with me how we showed up, so we'll be looking for the right fit, continuing to build our culture and bringing in pieces that will round out the foundational pieces we already have in place from this year that we really like”

The team bids farewell to eight 20-year-old players aging out of junior hockey. They'll leave behind some big shoes to fill. The list include top achievers like Niklas Gudmundson, Tanner George, and netminder Liam Ernst.

“We have some really strong young players in our roster this year who honestly could have been leaders for



WINKLER FLYERS PHOTO

The Winkler Flyers wrapped up the season with an awards party last week.

us this year,” Melo said, noting they'll be building around some of those key players “that maybe didn't have as big of a voice this year as they could have, as they have the potential to have.

“We feel really good about the young guys that we have returning, and obviously there's opportunity to bring new guys in, new Winkler Flyers, to leave their mark, have an impact.”

Melo sends thanks out to the entire community for their unfailing support of the team.

“It's a special thing moving here from Ontario and then getting to be a part of this community and recognizing just how good the fan support is, how good the corporate support is,” he said. “People love the Winkler Flyers, they want the Flyers to be a part of the community, they want us to do well.

“They want the Flyers to play hard, they want them to play an honest, hardworking game, and we love

that,” Melo said. “We love how passionate they are. I feel really grateful and privileged to get to coach in this community. This is probably the best job in junior hockey and that's largely due to how incredible the community is.”

YEAR-END AWARDS

Behind the scenes, the team put the final pin in the season with the presentation of its year-end awards on March 30.

Rookie of the Year is Connor Rieger, Most Improved Player is Will Lyons, Dustin Bell won the Community Commitment award, the Leadership & Perseverance award went to Kam Thomas, Charles Bernier and Riley Fequet are sharing the Heart & Soul award, Owen Wallace is the Top Defenseman, and both the Top Forward and Team MVP honours went to Niklas Gudmundson.

Royals take a 1-0 lead in provincial series

By Voice staff

The Winkler Royals got things off on the right skate last week as they squared off against the Killarney Shamrocks for the Senior A Provincial title.

A goal courtesy of Darion Penner had Winkler up 1-0 after 20 minutes.

Justin Augert made it 2-0 with a powerplay marker early in the second, while Aaron Lewadniuk made it 3-0 five minutes later. A second from Augert had Winkler up 4-0 before the Shamrocks finally got themselves on the board.

The third period saw Augert score his third of the night and Lewadniuk

his second while Phil Letkeman made it 7-1 with eight minutes left on the clock.

The series continues this Thursday with game two in Winkler. Game three, if needed, will be back in Killarney April 12.

> OROLES, FROM PG. 13

Last season's showing has Matuszewski feeling optimistic about the months ahead.

“They finished just over .500, and they had a good playoff series, won a round in the playoffs,” he said. “I think we have good potential.”

They're now looking to put the pieces together as junior hopefuls

take to the indoor field in Winkler's Meridian Exhibition Centre over the next few weeks.

“Obviously, the ability is the main thing ... but also good character guys,” Matuszewski said on what they're looking for. “That always makes it easier to come to the ball park.

“We want guys who really want to

be there. That's kind of the big one with junior ball is you want guys who want to be there and who want to win ... we want the guys who really want to put the work into it and be on the ball club.

“The level of baseball in the league has been getting better and better over the past few years ... it is a very competitive league.”

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Sugden rink battles through U20 nationals

By Haley Cvar

The Morden Curling Club's Team Sugden gained valuable experience on the national stage at the 2026 New Holland Canadian Under-20 Curling Championships, competing against the country's top junior men's rinks in Sudbury, Ont.

Skipped by Nash Sugden, with third Tyler Fehr, second Tanner Treichel and lead Ryan Thiessen, and coached by Lorne Hamblin, the Manitoba rep-

resentatives opened the event with a thrilling victory before facing a challenging stretch of round-robin play.

Morden started strong on March 28, edging Nova Scotia's Lockhart rink 9-8 in a tightly contested matchup that set the tone for their week. The Manitoba side showed composure under pressure, holding off a late push to secure the win.

The following day proved more difficult, as Morden dropped an 8-1 decision to Ontario's MacDougall rink,

followed by an 8-4 loss to Newfoundland and Labrador's Perry squad.

Despite the setbacks, Team Sugden remained competitive. On March 30, they battled Quebec's Tremblay rink in one of their closest games of the tournament, pushing the contest to an extra end before falling just short in a 6-5 decision.

Saskatchewan's Snow rink handed Morden an 8-5 defeat on March 31, and Alberta's Hlushak followed with a 7-2 win on April 1, as the Manitoba squad faced a gauntlet of strong provincial champions.

The team rebounded on April 2 with a pair of convincing victories to close out their round-robin schedule. Morden defeated Prince Edward Island's Bruce rink 8-2, then followed up with an 8-5 win over Northern Ontario's Curtis rink.

While their record did not place them in the playoff round, the Sugden rink demonstrated resilience throughout the week, finishing with three wins against some of the nation's best junior teams.

The experience marks an important step in the development of the young Morden squad, who gained exposure to elite-level competition and proved they can compete with top programs across Canada.

With a core group that has shown the ability to bounce back and learn from adversity, Team Sugden leaves Sudbury with momentum and valuable lessons as they continue to build for future seasons.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Morden Curling Club's Team Sugden represented Manitoba at the 2026 New Holland Canadian Under-20 Curling Championships in Sudbury, Ont. Pictured are skip Nash Sugden, third Tyler Fehr, second Tanner Treichel and lead Ryan Thiessen, along with coach Lorne Hamblin.

Winkler's Peters records first MLB hits with White Sox

By Kieran Reimer

The Tristan Peters era is officially underway on Chicago's South Side.

After being traded to the Chicago White Sox this past winter, the Winkler native made his debut with the club in their season opener on March 26 in Milwaukee.

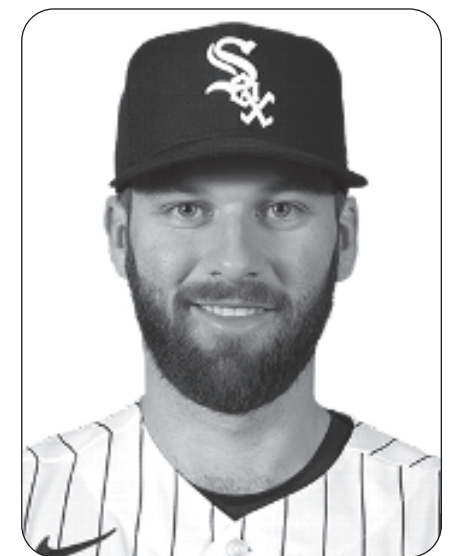
The 26-year-old left fielder went down swinging in his lone at-bat as the White Sox fell 14-2.

Peters then recorded his first career Major League Baseball hit — a fourth-inning double off Brewers right-hander Chad Patrick — in Chicago's next game on March 28.

Since then, Peters has registered four hits in four games, along with his first career run, scored March 30 in Miami against the Marlins.

While Chicago has struggled to a 1-5 start, Peters has performed well, tallying five hits, a run and a stolen base.

He is now 10 games into his MLB career after appearing in four games last season with the Tampa Bay Rays, where he became the fifth Manitoban to play in the majors.



Winkler native Tristan Peters has recorded his first Major League Baseball hits with the White Sox.

Winkler Senior Centre hosting estate planning workshop

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Senior Centre's Services for Seniors are teaming up with Access Credit Union's financial literacy experts for a workshop designed to get you thinking about how best to plan for your family's future after you're gone or are unable to care for yourself.

The Estate Planning Fundamentals presentation takes place at the senior centre (650 South Railway Ave.) on Thursday, April 23 at 1:30 p.m.

"We're looking to address some of the common questions and concerns that we hear about when it comes to planning for the future or planning

for next stages," says Emily Suderman, learning and development coordinator with Access CU.

This particular presentation will touch on the importance of estate planning, drafting a will, what probate is, and how a power of attorney works.

It's stuff that people of any age should look into doing, Suderman noted, but it often becomes much more top of mind as we age.

"Planning in advance is so important because it means you'll have more choices available rather than waiting and putting it off until the last minute," she said. "Attending something like this is a great start.

"We're grateful that the Winkler Senior Centre invited us to come and speak, because it isn't a topic we've spoken a ton about," Suderman shared. "The more education we can get out there and help prevent, whether it's fraud prevention or just protecting people's financial future, is really important when it comes to financial literacy."

Advanced registration is not required and all are welcome. The presentation will be followed by a Q&A session with facilitators.

Any questions about the session can be directed to the senior centre at 204-325-8964.

The **Voice**

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What's *Your* story?

Mordenite raising funds for Ride for Dad 2026

By Lorne Stelmach

A Morden resident is continuing his efforts to make a big impact with his fundraising support to fight prostate cancer.

It is Hank Hildebrand's own personal journey that motivates him for a fourth year in a row to take on the challenge of participating in the Ride For Dad set for the end of May.

"Instead of just writing a cheque and sending a donation, I thought I would do a little more than that," said Hildebrand. "I thought I could probably do a little better by getting involved in a fund-raiser."

Hildebrand is among a few area motorcyclists who will be participating in or supporting the Ride for Dad setting out from Winnipeg May 30 for Gimli.

Last year he raised over \$17,100, so he is setting his sights a little higher this time around; he hopes to raise \$17,500, and he's already over \$7,000 of the way there.

Hildebrand's motivation arises from his own journey with prostate cancer.

"Right now, things have been okay," he shared, noting it has been close to a five-year journey for him so far.

On average, it is estimated one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. Hildebrand suggests people think about the importance of those eight men in your life and what would you do if one of them couldn't be there for you.

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed can-

cer in Canadian men, most often hitting men over 40.

Successful treatment depends on early detection. In the longer term, research into improved diagnosis, treatment, and prevention will further improve our capacity to deal with this disease.

Hildebrand said it feels especially meaningful to be actively involved, and he very much appreciates the support from the community.

"Initially, my regular and good supporters had come forward, and it just keeps coming in every day and all the time," he said. "I'm very appreciative of the support that I get from local citizens and people that I know here."

"Our area here of Morden and Winkler has been very good. I've had a lot of friends and connections between these two communities, and it's been very helpful, and it goes beyond."

He also appreciates the connections that come through the ride itself.

"I connect with other people ... if people have gone through the same journey that I'm going through ... they're there for the same cause, so they are all supportive of each other, so that's been very good."

"I can't say enough about the positive feelings that you get when people contribute," he said. "It's heart-warming."

Anyone interested in supporting Hildebrand can e-mail hankh1@gmail.com or call 204-362-0903.

You can also check out the Ride for Dad website: ridefordad.ca.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Hank Hildebrand hopes to raise \$17,500 in donations for this year's Ride for Dad in support of prostate cancer research.

Manitoba pharmacists can now administer measles vaccines

By Lorne Stelmach

Pharmacists across the province are stepping up in the fight to battle the ongoing measles outbreak.

Pharmacists Manitoba had grown increasingly worried about the toll the rising case count is taking on the health of Manitobans and the impact on the health care system, so the association asked the province last week to make the vaccine readily available for pharmacists to administer.

According to public health data, the number of cases of measles in Manitoba in 2026 as of last week had been the highest in Canada and actually higher than every other province combined, with 352 in Manitoba compared to 230 in the rest of Canada, so an all-hands-on-deck approach is needed, said Gayle Romanetz, president of Pharmacists Manitoba.

Vaccination is the best way to prevent the highly contagious disease, yet 90 per cent of cases in Manitoba this year have been in people who were not immunized.

"More needs to be done and pharmacists can be part of the solution," said Romanetz. "There are hundreds of pharmacists working throughout Manitoba. Pharmacists are highly accessible and trusted health profes-

sionals and have ongoing relationships with their patients. Pharmacists can offer convenient, professional service to help boost vaccine uptake—just like flu and COVID-19."

Fellow Pharmacists Manitoba representative Britt Kural said they put out the call to the provincial government and things moved quickly, with the province giving them the go-ahead within days.

"We were really pleased to see that the health minister responded so quickly to the concerns that we raised," she said. "We know there is a growing problem with measles in the province, and we saw there to be an opportunity for pharmacists to help with protecting the population more than we are currently and with the goal ideally of reducing the number of incidents of measles that is coming up in Manitoba."

Kural noted they have an ongoing message to the government that pharmacists overall can play a much greater role in providing care in many ways.

"Pharmacists are in a good position to be providing much more care and access to primary care especially in these communities," she said. "In this province, pharmacists are actually the most restricted in the number of

things that we could do to provide care in community settings compared to every other province.

"We've been asking for this for awhile, and we were pleased to see that the minister moved so quickly on it," she said.

"We see that there has been some unique opportunities for individuals especially in the Southern Health region," added Kural, noting it is a region with low vaccination rates along with Prairie Mountain and Interlake.

"We know that the vaccine is very effective ... but we know vaccination rates have dropped to the point where we are seeing the numbers creep up in the incidents rates. They were well under control just a few years ago, so we would really like to see improved uptake of the vaccine, and the improved accessibility is the first step."

There are over 1,700 pharmacists working in nearly 500 pharmacies throughout 90 communities. Most pharmacists already have access to Manitoba's public health information management system to access immunization histories and schedules while also having the ability to inform physicians of any new vaccinations.

"This is a common sense step that will help more Manitobans get protected," said Health Minister Uzoma

Asagwara. "Pharmacists are trusted, accessible health care providers in communities across Manitoba, and expanding their role makes it easier for families to get vaccinated and protect those most at risk."

Asagwara signed an order to allow pharmacists to administer measles vaccines to Manitobans aged two to 19. The vaccine will continue to be provided at no cost through Manitoba's publicly-funded immunization program.

Children should receive their first dose of measles vaccine at one year and a second dose at between four and six years of age for routine immunizations.

Children living in regions most impacted by the current outbreak may be eligible for an additional dose as young as six months. Manitobans are encouraged to speak to their health-care provider to find out more.

"This is a good first step in making these vaccines more available," said Romanetz. "Pharmacists are ready to work with Minister Asagwara and public health to support convenient access to care and the continued expansion of services in communities across Manitoba."

Back 40 coffeehouse celebrating the music of Neil Young

April 17 coffeehouse at Winkler Arts and Culture

By Lorne Stelmach

The Back Forty Festival is inviting everyone to join them in celebrating the music of Neil Young.

The festival likes to do an annual coffeehouse, and they decided to approach it differently this year.

"Very often it's a musician who has passed away, but this year we thought with it being Neil Young's 80th birthday, it would be nice to pay tribute to someone who is still with us," said president Scott Bell.

The night of music is set for Friday, April 17 at Winkler Arts and Culture.

"Most of the performances will be acoustic, but there will be some small groups playing as well,"

said Bell. "We already have a really good lineup in place ... it will really cover a nice cross-section of Neil Young's music."

There will be a lot of familiar faces taking to the stage.

"A lot of people who are quite common to our coffee houses have agreed to play, and we are anticipating more performers," he said, noting they have room on the roster for more, if anyone is interested in getting involved.

The evening is free to the public

"With these coffee houses, we just encourage people to come out and enjoy some live music," Bell said.



Small Wonders hosting spring carnival Sat., April 18

By Lorne Stelmach

A local nursery school in Morden is hosting an event this month aimed at raising awareness of and interest in what it has to offer to the community.

Small Wonders is holding a spring carnival Saturday, April 18 from 10 a.m. to noon at its location in West-side Community Church.

"We would like to bring the community and our families together to just be able to have a fun time," said vice-chair Nadine Lam, who noted it is aimed at families with children aged two to six. The morning will feature crafts, face painting and an appearance by The Country Princess along

with food and a raffle.

Small Wonders offers a variety of morning and afternoon classes throughout the week, with some specifically for three and four year olds but also some that are mixed groups. They overall have 100 spaces for students.

What sets them apart, the school says, is play-based learning where every moment becomes an opportunity for exploration and imagination. They focus on nurturing not only academic skills but also social, emotional, and physical development.

Lam suggested a facility and program like Small Wonders really plays an important role and meets a signifi-

cant need in the community.

"With the current growing population, there is currently not enough day care spaces, so Small Wonders is one of the options in the community where kids can come for half a day to enjoy their time in a learning environment," she said.

"It's a structured environment so the kids have an idea of what to expect when they're coming into the program, and they just have a blast. The staff are just amazing. I can't say enough about this program and how wonderful it is."

Executive director Pam Staple noted they very much rely on community support to be able to offer their

programs, and they hope the carnival will raise awareness and interest.

"It's important to get our name out there. We really rely on word of mouth, and oftentimes parents say, oh, I didn't know you exist," she said. "So we're hoping to get our name out more in the community and have people come visit us and see our space and meet our staff."

And they hope to perhaps attract new families with their registration day on April 23, just a few days following the carnival.

"We're hoping that by welcoming in the community they'll see our space, meet our staff, and be interested in registration as well," Staple said.

Manitoba minimum wage to increase to \$16.40

By Voice staff

Manitoba's minimum wage is on the rise again this fall.

The provincial minimum wage will

increase by 40 cents to \$16.40, effective Oct. 1, Manitoba Labour and Immigration said last week.

Updated annually, Manitoba's minimum wage is regulated through the

Employment Standards Code. The adjustment reflects Manitoba's 2025 inflation rate, rounded up to the nearest five cents.

For more information on the min-

imum wage and other employment standards, visit: www.gov.mb.ca/labour/standards.

Fed. gov't commits to 30-day passport processing

By Voice staff

Starting April 1, the Government of Canada has committed to giving Canadians a full refund of their passport or travel document fee if it takes more than 30 business days for the passport office to process their application.

Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Lena Metleg Diab made the announcement last week.

"Canadians expect reliable services from their government. While most passports are processed within our service standards, our new refund

policy reflects our commitment to maintaining excellence in our passport delivery system," Diab said. "As with all our services and programs, we're focused on maximizing efficiency and making improvements that make a positive difference for people."

The clock starts when a complete application is received and ends when the passport or travel document is printed and verified. It does not include mailing time. If processing exceeds 30 business days, refunds will be issued automatically.

Your application needs to be complete to qualify, which includes a filled-out form, all required documents (including a passport photo that meets requirements), and the full payment of fees.

Service standards for passport applications generally vary between 10 and 20 business days plus mailing time, the government shares, depending on the type of Service Canada Centre people apply at, or if they apply at an embassy or consulate, or through the mail.

This policy does not apply to some

administrative services, such as replacement, transfer, or true certified copy fees, or to child refugee travel documents and child certificates of identity, as these are considered low in value under the Service Fees Act urgent and express services, which have separate, shorter timelines; if those timelines are not met, fees are refunded under existing authorities applications processed in exceptional circumstances that may impact operations

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Kae Lambrecht

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Thank you friends, family and community. Your kindness and shared stories and memories of Mom has brought great comfort.

Special thanks to Menzies Medical Centre, Dr. Brian Peters HSC, Buhler Eye Care Centre, staff at BTHC and Palliative Care Team.

Many thanks to Tanya Rempel and Home Care Team and Buhler Active Living staff who gave Mom TLC for the last seven years.

Gratitude to Wiebe's Funeral Home, Pastor Tom Baker and musicians who shared in her Celebration of Life.

PUBLIC NOTICE



NOTICE OF REGISTRATION OF PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES FOR GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF STANLEY

Please be advised that a general municipal election will be held on October 28, 2026.

Prospective municipal election candidates must register with the Senior Election Official (SEO) during the registration period before they may begin to accept contributions, incur expenses, fundraise or borrow money for their campaign.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT candidate registrations will be received:

For the office of head of council: Between May 1 and September 22, 2026

For the office of councillor: Between June 30 and September 22, 2026

at the RM of Stanley Administration Office, 1-23111 PTH 14, during the regular hours of business.

To obtain a registration form contact the SEO at the email or telephone number listed below:

Dan Giesbrecht
Senior Election Official (S.E.O.)
RM of Stanley
204-325-4101
seo@rmofstanley.ca

Dated at the RM of Stanley on April 9, 2026.

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PUBLIC NOTICE



CITY OF WINKLER PESTICIDE USE PROGRAM

PUBLIC NOTICE May 1, 2026 - October 1, 2026

Public notice is hereby given that the City of Winkler and/or its designated agents may conduct the following Pesticide Control Programs during 2025, if necessary, depending on infestations.

1. To control noxious weeds on road allowances and rights-of-way within the City of Winkler. The herbicides that may be used if required include: **Round-Up, PAR III, Fiesta.**
2. To control rodents at the Winkler Municipal Airport, Cemetery, and any location within City limits where the designated Officer deems necessary using rodenticide: **Ratak and/or Rozul RTU.**
3. To control mosquito larvae in stagnant water within the corporate limits and a 3-kilometer buffer area using **Aquabac 200G and Vectobac 200G**, on both private and public property. To control adult mosquitoes using **Delta Gard.**
4. To control horticultural insect pests using **Trounce and Pounce.**

The duration of each program will vary within this period depending on weather conditions and pest population levels.

All pesticides used and procedures applied will be in accordance with the approved label recommendations.

"The public may, within 15 days after this notice is published, submit written comments to the department or register a written objection to the use of pesticide next to their property."

Manitoba Environment and Climate Change
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Box 35, 14 Fultz Boulevard, Winnipeg, MB R3Y 0L6
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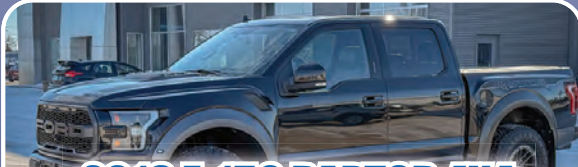


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