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On the catwalk for SCCR



Jeannette Labossiere waves at cheering supporters at the South Central Cancer Resource's Building Bridges Fashion Show in Winkler May 14. For more photos, see Pg. 3.

PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

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Make It a Reality Award winner seeks to give back

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The 2026 Make it A Reality Award winner has gone through a lot in her young life, but she hasn't let it slow her down—and she has her sights set high for her next chapter.

On May 12, the Winkler Community Foundation presented the \$30,000 scholarship to Garden Valley Collegiate's Heidi Braun.

The award, distributed to Braun over the next four years of her post-secondary education, is part of \$125,000 in scholarships the foundation will distribute this year from its Gordon Wiebe Education Fund. It is their largest single award, presented annually to a Winkler student who has demonstrated commitment to their community, achievement in education, and a strong capacity for leadership.

Braun certainly fits the bill, shared scholarships coordinator Natalie Neudorf, noting she was selected for her "active volunteerism, her passion for service, and her exceptional grades.

"Heidi's commitment to community and volunteering stands out," she said. "Her volunteering involvements include at the Boundary Trails hospital gift shop, Fairford Indigenous Reserve DVBS, Camp Sunshine, active involvement with her church's Sunday School, and her school's Youth and Philanthropy program.

"Heidi has a passion for serving children, and she lights up the room when speaking about them," Neudorf said, adding how she was "described by both of her references as having a heart of gold, and the scholarship committee absolutely agrees with this characterization."

Receiving this scholarship is a game-changer for her, Braun shared, as it will allow her to fully focus on her studies and worry far less about how she's going to pay for it all.

But it also represents so much more than money.

"It represents belief, encouragement, and a reminder that my goals are not only possible but worth investing in," Braun said. "I feel both grateful



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Winkler Community Foundation president Barb Neufeld presented Heidi Braun with the 2026 Make It a Reality Award last week.

and humbled to be able to considered worthy of that support."

The last 10 years of Braun's life have been filled with medical appointments, treatments, and uncertainty, ever since she was diagnosed with a brain tumour at the age of seven.

"There were moments when my world felt very small, centred around hospital rooms, recovery periods,

and simply getting through the next day," Braun said. "There were also moments of fear, frustration, and exhaustion, where the future felt uncertain and distant. But over time, I also learned something incredibly important through that experience.

Continued on page 4

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Building bridges with SCCR



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

South Central Cancer Resource's annual fashion show was a near sold-out event at the Meridian Exhibition Centre in Winkler May 14. The evening saw models—all of whom had a cancer story to share, whether it was their own or a loved ones—strut the catwalk wearing fashions and accessories from a host of local businesses. How much the night raised wasn't available at press time, but it will all go to fund SCCR's supportive programs for Pembina Valley residents grappling with a cancer diagnosis. The theme of the night was building bridges, highlighting how one is never alone as they navigate a cancer journey—family, friends, and organizations like SCCR are there to help you get through it. Clockwise from top left: Cheryl Enns, Michelle Isaac, and Nathan Fehr on the catwalk.

Stanley reeve announces re-election bid

By Lorne Stelmach

Ike Friesen announced last week that he will seek election this fall for another term as reeve of the RM of Stanley.

Friesen said his decision comes down to the positive experience he's had heading up council thus far.

"I've really enjoyed my term. It's had its challenges, but I'm up for those challenges," he said.

Friesen said he feels they have made good progress in a number of areas, and he particularly continues to prioritize regional co-operation.

"One of the big things that was on my to do list when I got started on this term as reeve was to try to get our communities to work together more ... Morden, Winkler and Stanley," he said. "I know that we've accomplished a lot in that area, and that is something I want to continue working on to keep that relationship going and to strengthen that further ... our whole region needs that unity."

He feels the region has overcome the divide that existed in the past between the three communities.

"I think we're past that ... but I feel like working with another term, it will just be normal for us to be working together," he said. "It's just been a good experience. I've met a lot of

good people, and I would like to continue to work with everyone."

Looking ahead, Friesen said there are a number of things they're working on in the background, with a lot of it coming down to infrastructure issues, and those are challenges that continue to come with the growth of the municipality and the region as a whole.

"As you grow, there are growing pains, and with that come the challenges that we are faced with things like keeping up with our infrastructure needs and the differing opinions about the growth," he said. "We can't stay stagnant. We have to keep moving ahead."

There are many different needs to be addressed, but he is optimistic they will have a good team in place

"I feel confident there's going to be some [councillors] running again for sure," Friesen suggested.

But having new candidates step forward as well would be a good sign to see that people are interested and engaged in their local government.

"I would hate to see that people don't want to get involved. I understand it's not for everyone," Friesen said. "It is not necessarily for everyone, and it takes quite a time commitment, so I realize that is not for everyone."

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Winkler Adopt-a-Plot volunteers get to work

By Ashleigh Viveiros

With the nicer weather finally here, Winkler's dedicated Adopt-a-Plot volunteers have gotten to work.

Crews were busy last week cleaning out the flower beds beside Winkler Arts and Culture and tidying up around the trees and shrubs that populate the Greg Ens Memorial Park.

Those teams, and similar ones at public flower beds throughout the community, have committed to keeping their assigned spaces weed-free and tidy for the summer.

Program coordinator Margaret Penner shares that she has about two dozen people who have stepped up to fill these roles, but there's certainly room for more.

"I'm still looking for several more volunteers," she says, noting that in the case of gardening many hands very much does make for lighter work—and more fun, to boot.

Many of the volunteers have been adopting a plot for years, but fresh faces are always welcome.

"Probably 95 per cent of them are returning volunteers," shares Penner, spotlighting one longtime volunteer who has tended to the beds in Parkview Gardens for 14 years. "She's going to be turning 85 next year and she told me this is her last year. She is so meticulous—she brings her own

little trimmer, edger, and just makes it perfect."

The program is great for apartment or condo dwellers who love gardening and miss having a larger space to tend to.

"It's a chance to have a plot that's your own, and it's a very gratifying thing to be able to do something where you can see you're making a difference," Penner says. "People take pride in what they do, they almost take an ownership of their spot."

City crews do a great job watering and tidying up Winkler's many parks and green spaces, Penner notes, but there are only so many work hours in the week, so the volunteers' help really take the city's beautification efforts to the next level.

Amongst the crew of volunteers is a team of newcomers to the community.

"They've moved here from Ukraine. They had done gardening back home," Penner says. "Some of them live in apartments now and they just love the idea of being able to get their hands into the dirt and give back to the community."

"I love flowers," says Viktoriia, who helped out last year and was eager to return this summer.

"It's important for us," she adds, speaking through translator and fellow volunteer gardener Kathrynna. "It's an opportunity for us. In Ukraine, it is always a green country. Many parks, forests, flowers everywhere. We want that for Winkler too."

Working alongside these ladies to oversee the rejuvenation of the Winkler Butterfly Garden at the art gallery is Brenda Thiessen, who moved to Winkler a couple of years ago.

Thanks to a \$2,000 grant from



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Above: Winkler Adopt-a-Plot volunteers Viktoriia, Kathrynna, and Ella hard at work in the Winkler Butterfly Garden. Right: Orville Enns and his wife Anna have taken on tending to the shrubs at the Greg Ens Memorial Park.



Healthy Together Now, the plan is to re-establish the butterfly garden with signage and new plants so it can re-certified through the North American Butterfly Association. Many of the plants previously in the area were moved to the Discovery Nature Sanctuary a few years ago, though the giant butterfly statue remained.

Thiessen, an avid gardener, is excited at the prospect of breathing new life into the space.

"I'm passionate about Monarch butterflies," she shares. "So I'm grateful I get to do this."

The Adopt-a-Plot program gives Thiessen the opportunity to get even more gardening fun into her summer.

"It's fantastic. And Margaret does such an amazing job of drawing everybody in and getting them going," she says. "I met one of my closest


friends here through this last year.

"I'd really encourage people to get involved, because you can do as little or as much as you want. There's lots of options and wonderful people to meet."

If you've got time to give to keep Winkler's floral displays looking their best, shoot Penner a text at 204-362-2552.

Even if you've not got a wealth of gardening experience behind you, you can still get involved, Penner stresses, so long as you can take some friendly direction about what needs to be done.

The assigned plots are all manageable sizes, she adds, and you're simply asked to commit an hour or so a week, as needed and on whatever day and time works for you, keeping them shipshape.



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> MAKE IT A REALITY AWARD, FROM PG. 2

"I learned resilience. Not the kind that is louder, obvious, but the kind that always shows up quietly when you choose to keep going anyway. I learned patience, especially with myself, and with a process that cannot be rushed. And I learned perspective, understanding that even on difficult days there is still value in progress, no matter how small it may seem.

"Most importantly, I learned how deeply healthcare professionals can impact a person's life. Not just through medicine or treatment plans, but through kindness, reassurance, and the dignity they provide in moments that feel overwhelming and uncertain. Those experiences stayed with me, and over time they began to shape the direction I want my life to take."

Braun plans to attend Brandon University to study nursing. Her dream is to one day work in a pediatric oncology department.

"I want to become the kind of nurse who understands what it feels like to be on the other side of the hospital bed. Someone who not only provides care, but also sees the person behind the diagnosis. I want to be able to offer reassurance in moments of fear, clarity in moments of confusion, and dignity in moments where patients feel like they may have lost control."

Receiving this award serves as a great motivator as she works towards that goal, Braun said.

"It reinforces my commitment to my goals and reminds me that I'm not just working towards a degree, but towards a future where I can give back."

Discovery Trails installs time capsule

By Lorne Stelmach

Morden's newest school recently installed a time capsule to mark the milestone of its opening.

Time capsules are a long running tradition in conjunction with the completion of a new buildings, so space was left for one block to be removed and replaced when École Discovery Trails school was finished.

A brand new brick dated 2024 was installed earlier this month to mark the year that the school opened, and Mike Malchuk and Justin Fedoruk from Alpha Masonry were brought back to do the honours. Malchuk was on site at Discovery Trails when the first brick was laid, and Fedoruk came on site two weeks later.

"We actually brought in masons who worked on the school to come in and actually finish that last brick," said principal Samuel Jerema.

There had been a bit of a delay in placing the time capsule because they wanted to have things to represent

their first year of operation.

"We wanted to have an opportunity to fill that time capsule with memorabilia from our first year at École Discovery Trails instead of doing it right away in September of 2024," said Jerema.

The items in the time capsule range from 'Dino' student lanyards to a flash drive with photos from the grand opening as well as a scoresheet from the Dino girls first ever sports banner when the Grade 7 girls won the zone basketball title.

"There's a number of other things like a pencil ... the thought was when I put the pencil in, it was kind of thinking maybe in the future students won't know what a pencil is," Jerema said.

It all was put in place in a copper box that fits in behind the stone, and the school did a livestream so that everyone could be part of it.

Jerema feels the opening of a new school is a significant thing for a growing community like Morden.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Mike Malchuk and Justin Fedoruk from Alpha Masonry helped lay the first bricks at Discovery Trails and were brought back to lay the final one to seal in the Morden school's time capsule.

"It's an important milestone for the school. Just like the grand opening, this is kind of an event to officially launch the school into the future, like here we go," he said. "We've established this school. It's up and running, and here's what life was like in our first year. All of these items kind of tell the story of our first year at Discovery Trails, and it's really neat to be able to share this with all of the students. The feedback from the teachers

was really positive about how engaging that was for the students to be part of that history.

"I think it's a pretty big milestone for Morden ... and it's a very busy facility," he noted, citing the example of the local Ukrainian school program using the space as well. "It's more than just a school. It's a space for the community to come and learn and grow and be active and engaged."

J.R. Walkof choir performs at the Leg



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The J.R. Walkof School Gr. 2/3 volunteer choir performed as part of the Music Monday Concert Series at the Manitoba Legislative Building last week.

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Students from J.R. Walkof School were on the provincial stage last week.

The Winkler elementary school's Gr. 2/3 volunteer choir headed into Winnipeg May 13 to perform at the Manitoba Legislative Building as part of the Music Month Concert Series.

"This is a series the Manitoba Music Educators Association puts on," explains music teacher Caleb Reimer, who notes it was an annual event pre-pandemic that returned for the first time this year.

School music programs from across the province apply for the opportunity to perform at the Leg to help mark May as Music Month, and J.R. Walkof was fortunate enough to be selected.

"It was a fantastic day," Reimer said, sharing the group sang three songs from the steps of the Grand Staircase:

"Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel," "Peace Be With You," and "Whisper."

The kids worked hard on their performance, and they were thrilled for the big day to finally arrive.

"It was a lot of fun. We'd worked on it for quite a while," said Reimer. "Some of the pieces we'd already sung at other places, but we also added a piece or two for this particular performance.

"It's all about getting out of our community, being able to share our gifts with others."

They were joined that day by a handful of other choirs and bands.

"It's always great to hear other ensembles and see what's going on in other places," Reimer said. "These groups were from a variety of different places ... so it lets our kids see there's great music happening all across the province."

Continued on page 8



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OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



What is relevant?

Iwonder sometimes: what is a relevant column? I mean, there are plenty of people who read this, as evidenced by varying letters and comments received regularly. But what is interesting to the average reader?

Part of this existing as an ongoing question in my mind is the fact that I have no handle on the demographics of the average column reader. Based on feedback over the years, I suspect my readers tend to be women between the ages of 30 to 80. I believe this mostly because for every guy that comes to me and compliments my columns, 10 women do. Still, that's a pretty broad and general group.

Why do I care? Well, as a writer you want to remain relevant to people.

You can do this by being very specialized. For example, I could be a columnist focused on small engine repair or the horticulture of annual flowers that thrive in southern Manitoba.

But over time I have come to understand that specialization is not my thing. I am a generalist. I am a macro thinker. I always have been—I know a little bit about a lot of things rather than a lot of things about one or two subjects.

Age also factors into the column content. I mean, I am different now than I was when I started writing these 16 years ago. The world is substantially different now and so too are the things we write about.

The divisions that have always existed are far more

visible now, like cracks in a wall that were once hidden by a thin veneer of plaster now wholly out in the open. This makes it harder to find middle ground in the writing. I prefer to sit in the middle, but people are increasing distrustful and even hostile to centrist thinking.

So, I write about what's on my mind and hope it's on yours too. I write about infrastructure. I write about living in a small but growing community. I write about experiences as a parent, as a manager, as a person who has specific interests in gaming, technology, and the fact that I have a formal diagnosis of Combined ADHD.

I write about me and in so doing hope that—intentionally or by accident—I also end up writing about you.

You should know that I value you. That I see you as my community. As

Continued on page 7



By Peter Cantelon

Letters

THANK-YOU, NEIGHBOUR

Sometimes it feels like we don't choose places; places choose us.

When we were viewing our house, everything just fell into place, and we felt so cozy in the home we eventually chose for our life. But the greatest gift was still to come. And that gift is our neighbours, Dale and Norma.

They turned out to be lovely people, slightly older than us. They have always been welcoming, polite, and

kind. They were the ones we could ask about renovation details or material names, or borrow a tall ladder from to clean the roof.

It was them we sincerely wanted to treat to our cooking on special occasions, congratulate on holidays, or wish well on their travels. They were the first to leave a gift at our door when our daughter was born. They helped clear the snow when my husband was away for six months of training and I was home with a newborn. They were the ones

who came over to offer help when they saw an ambulance at our gate. They shared delicious cookies just to lift our spirits.

We are endlessly grateful to these people for their humanity and warmth. We hope to one day become the same kind of support for those around us.

P.S. Someone is going to be very lucky to have them as neighbours.

Anna and Alex Barvinok and family, Morden

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“Don’t give up”

Stroke survivor, brain injury advocates reflect on the gaps in support

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Advocates for a stronger framework of supports for people living with stroke and traumatic and non-traumatic brain injuries were in the area this month to raise awareness.

Dr. Margie Hesom, a stroke survivor, was joined at the Morden Legion May 9 by speech-language pathologist Kailynn Williams Macaulay and Dr. Lisa Engel, a researcher with the University of Manitoba’s Brain Injury in Manitoba (BIMb) project. The trio had information tables set up as part of the Legion’s spring vendor market fundraiser.

Given that May is Stroke Awareness Month, it was perfect timing to get the word out about the support that is available in our area—and the gaps that still very much exist.

It’s been five years since Hesom experienced her first stroke, and she has a message for anyone just starting down a similar path:

“Don’t give up,” she stressed. “You can make progress. I’m five years into my stroke journey and I’m still making progress.

“And it’s hard, but ask for help,” Hesom said, urging people to come down to the Stroke Survivor Peer Support Group she runs at Winkler’s Central Station Community Centre the third Tuesday of every month. Further details are available online at strokerecovery.ca or by calling 204-942-2880.

“As a doctor, I knew a bit about managing acute stroke, but very little about recovery,” Hesom said. “After suffering a stroke, I wanted to help my community. All I could think to do was to create a safe space to provide peer support.

“The group is open to stroke survi-

vors no matter how severe or slight, family members, and caregivers.”

While gathering with others going through similar challenges can be a great support, post-stroke rehabilitation efforts are also integral to the healing progress. But finding those supports remains a challenge, especially in rural Manitoba.

“It’s still a struggle to find what you need. If you’ve got money, you can pay, but if you’re on disability it’s much harder,” Hesom said, lamenting the lack of publicly-funded rehab and support services.

That’s where the Brain Injury of Manitoba project comes in, as they’re working to research needs, develop strategies, and lobby the government to improve Manitoba’s acquired brain injury supports and services.

“This is entirely what our project is all about,” Engel shared in reflecting on the importance of setting up shop at community events across the province. “It’s about building community-based connections ... and looking at how we build awareness about brain injury.

“There’s about 50,000 to 70,000 Manitobans living with brain injury, and we’re one of the most underserved and underfunded provinces in the entire country” when it comes to supports for those patients, Engel said, which means people simply aren’t getting the post-injury or stroke care they need for optimal recovery outcomes. “That’s a huge thing. What the research data shows us is that when we think about brain injury and stroke there should be a trajectory of improvement. Our brains are amazing things, and through neuroplasticity, if you have the right supports, you can continue to make gains for decades.

From left: Speech-language pathologist Kailynn Williams Macaulay, stroke survivor Dr. Margie Hesom, and researcher Dr. Lisa Engel were in town this month to raise awareness about the need for more publicly-funded supports for people living with brain injuries.

PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE



“But if it’s an unenriched environment, when you’re not getting that community of support, that social support, that interaction, having things to do, you can actually experience decline, which is actually more expensive for our medical system overall because then people have other needs that are more expensive to deal with.”

Collecting signatures for a petition to call on the federal government to support Bill C-206 and develop a national strategy to support and improve brain injury awareness, prevention, and treatment was Williams Macaulay, who operates Local Speech + Language Services.

“Once we have the signatures we will bring this forward to our local MP and ask them to bring it to the House of Commons,” she explained.

Should Bill C-206 become law, it will mean more funding for programming across the country.

Williams Macaulay is passionate about making those supports more accessible to everyone who needs them.

“I got into this because my grandpa had a stroke, that’s why I became a speech-language

pathologist,” she shared. “One of the most important things to me is making sure that in rural Manitoba ... we have the same access to language groups, to literacy groups ... and not just for victims of stroke or brain injuries, but their families too, because I watched that firsthand with my family.”

Early access is critical, she stressed. “They talk about the first six months after brain injury being one of the best windows to rebuild those neural pathways,” Williams Macaulay said, noting far too many people struggle in that time to find the help they need. “We want to fill that void, fill that gap.”

You can learn more about the advocacy work being done at nationalstrategyonbraininjury.ca or connect with Engel about the BIMb project at lisa.engel@umanitoba.ca.

“I’M FIVE YEARS INTO MY STROKE JOURNEY AND I’M STILL MAKING PROGRESS.”

> CANTELON, FROM PG. 6

an introvert (ambivert?) this is my form of mostly one-way socializing. I imagine we are having coffee together and chatting about the things I write about. This is my process and how columns are eventually born.

There are times when I wonder who you are. Times when I wonder what you want to talk about. You should know I find you wild-

ly interesting and want to remain relevant to you, but I understand this is a moving target through time and circumstance.

Anyhow, thanks for reading. If you are a new reader and somehow made it this far, thanks to you as well. This is not a typical column, but I don’t know if I have a typical column.

I wonder if teens read these? I wonder if people in their 20s read these? I wonder ...

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Manitoba 

Drive for Cancer cruises through region Saturday

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Car aficionados from across the region will set out from Altona this weekend for the Legends Car Club's annual Drive for Cancer.

"We usually see between 30 to 40 cars come out, depending on the weather," shares organizer Lyle Dunsmore, noting the club has hosted this ride in support of South Central Cancer Resource for decades.

The 2026 edition leaves from the Altona Co-op grocery store parking lot Saturday morning, with registration running from about 9:30-10:30 a.m.

From there they'll head for Winkler, stop for lunch at Syl's in Carman, pop by the Miami Railway Station Museum, Morden Nursery, and then back to Altona for a barbecue supper.

Registration is \$10 per person, which includes supper and your first hand for the poker run. Additional hands are \$5 each or three for \$10. The first-place winner will take home 25 per cent of the winnings, second-place gets 15 per cent, and third gets 10 per cent. The other 50 per cent goes to SCCR.

"The poker thing is just an excuse to go for a drive with our cars," says



VOICE FILE PHOTO

Legends Car Club's Drive for Cancer sets out from the Co-op grocery store in Altona this Saturday morning in support of South Central Cancer Resource.

Dunsmore. "They don't necessarily make us that much money, but the members are hopefully getting pledges from friends and family members—that's when the money adds up."

Can't make the drive this Saturday? You have another chance to see a host of classic wheels at the fundraising barbecue and car show taking place on Saturday, May 30 in the Janzens Chevrolet parking lot in Winkler. It runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Lunch is by donation, with all funds once again going to SCCR.

Last year's drive and Winkler car show together bought in upwards of \$35,000 for SCCR, which offers a host of free support programs for people navigating a cancer diagnosis.

Dunsmore is a volunteer with SCCR's transportation program, which connects people with drivers and covers the cost of mileage to and from cancer-related medical appointments.

It's one less thing for a person to have to worry about while dealing

with everything else that comes with a medical illness, Dunsmore says.

"They've got maybe five weeks of radiation treatment. It take 10 minutes a day, but you have to be there five days a week," he says. "That's 25 trips—you've got to hit up family and friends 25 times if you don't have somebody who can help you out with this stuff. Plus the cost of driving there and back every day. SCCR takes care of all that."

The agency, which relies solely on community donations, has always been a cause that's close to the Legends members' hearts.

"Right from the beginning we've supported them," says Dunsmore, "and, sadly, through the years we have lost a number of our members to cancer."

If you'd like to take part in the Drive for Cancer, stop by the starting point this Saturday, May 23. You can also download pledge forms online at legendscarclub.ca.

That's also the place to go to stay updated on the club's upcoming summer events. They meet every Tuesday night at The Ice Cream Hut but also have car shows scheduled for July 26 and Aug. 15.

"We're always looking for new members," says Dunsmore. "We're a welcoming group."

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PRESENTS



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Dr. Joss Reimer to receive Order of Manitoba

By Voice staff

Among the 12 people selected to receive the Order of Manitoba this summer is a Winkler native who has gone on to national success.

The award, our province's highest honour, is presented annually to Manitobans who have demonstrated excellence and achievement, thereby enriching the social, cultural or economic well-being of the province and its residents.

Among the recipients for 2026 is Dr. Joss Reimer.

Reimer was the medical lead for Manitoba's COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation Task Force, where she led the province through the largest vaccine campaign in history.

Among her many leadership roles, she has served as chief medical officer for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and as medical director of public health for the City of Winnipeg. More recently, she was appointed as Canada's chief public health officer.

Also being honoured at the formal investiture ceremony scheduled to be held on July 16 at the Manitoba Legislative Building will be Tracy Dahl, Andrew Harris, Chantal Kreviazuk, Jocelyne Larocque, Dr. Peter MacDonald, Ash Modha, Brian Pallister, Diane



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Dr. Joss Reimer will receive the Order of Manitoba July 16.

Roussin, Elder Billie Schibler, Dr. Lotfollah Shafai, and Douglas Stephen.

> CHOIR, FROM PG. 5

"And to be able to share it with our legislators—because they're walking through, I saw different leaders and MLAs walk by—to share with them how important music is to us and how it should be to our province as well."

Reimer noted the trip was made possible thanks to a grant from the MMEA, which covered busing costs.

The kids also got the opportunity to chat briefly with Morden-Winkler MLA Carrie Hiebert and tour the Legislative grounds before heading back home.

Honouring community builders

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler and District Chamber of Commerce last week shone a spotlight on some of the businesses and non-profits doing outstanding work in our community.

The organization presented five awards at its 2026 P.W. Enns Business Awards Gala, held at the Meridian Exhibition Centre May 12.

"It is not easy to run a successful business. You must do a lot of things right to survive, never mind excel," observed chamber president Doug Eidse, noting businesses have navigated a host of uncertainties of late, but the chamber has been thrilled to be a part of countless grand openings over the past year as the local economy continues to thrive. "Winkler is an incredible place to do business. That has not changed and it will not change. The resilience, the entrepreneurial spirit and drive for growth remain stronger than ever.

"Tonight is about celebration, it is about recognizing the outstanding businesses and organizations that strengthen our community, foster innovation, and bring us closer together year after year. We are proud to honour those who have gone above and beyond, setting the standard for excellence in our region."

Receiving this year's Non-Profit Service Award was Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pembina Valley. The agency facilitates mentoring matches between children and volunteers across the region, and has done so for generations.

"To be chosen for this award is something that we are truly grateful for, especially considering that it is our 50th anniversary this year," noted executive director Jenelle Neufeld. "Every day we have the privilege of walking alongside children and youth in our communities through mentoring relationships and programs that help build confidence, resilience, and belonging.

"This work would not be possible without the people in this room and throughout our communities," she told the assembled business leaders, going on to thank as well the volunteers, staff, board members, and other dedicated supporters and partners who make it possible for them to reach as many kids as they do. "Thank you for believing in the importance of mentoring and investing in young people."

Up next to receive the Customer Service Award was One Insurance Group. The brokerage began as a family-owned company and today has locations in 29 communities across the

province, including in Winkler. They pride themselves on offering local, responsive customer service in each of their locations.

"We're very honored to be the recipient of the customer service excellence award. It came as a surprise," said regional manager Florian Schlak.

"I'd like to thank all partners and customers for the service that we are able to provide to them," he continued. "Customer service is not something that we just take lightly. It's about educating the customers to make important decisions. And I'm very happy that my team is able to deliver on that."

Receiving this year's Business Builder Award, which recognizes a company that is not only growing successfully but working to strengthen the local economy and community as it does so, was King's Deli Market & Eatery.

"Levelling up the Pembina Valley and doing our part in this community has always been our goal," said owner Colton Schiller. "A bustling dining room with the buzz of conversation, it's our music. A busy lunch rush or catering event, that's our game day. And the best thing is seeing a group of tradesworkers in high-vis vests sitting next to the table of well-dressed business execs enjoying the same food and nodding their heads along to the same song. And that's our job well done.

"In a world of digital town squares, we believe that the thing that connects people the most is a great sandwich and a delicious bowl of soup."

He stressed how integral the King's Deli team has been to its success,



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Representatives from Golden West Broadcasting, King's Deli, Schnell Industries, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pembina Valley, and One Insurance with their awards at the Winkler Chamber's P.W. Enns Business Awards Gala.

which recently included opening a second location in Morden.

"A great sandwich is like an iceberg. The part that you can eat is just that little bit you can see from beyond the kitchen. It takes logistics, HR, inventory, preparation, coaching the team. It takes mutual support and much, much more. And these five women clustered around me, they are the reason that this team is here today."

Golden West Broadcasting took home the Community Builder Award for its nearly 70 years of serving the Pembina Valley.

"At the core of everything we do, our goal is simple, and that is connecting

our community," said general manager Bob Miller, lauding longtime company CEO and president Elmer Hildebrand for his work to grow the company. "Your leadership, vision, and belief in what local media can do for a community have made a lasting

Continued on page 10

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> CHAMBER GALA, FROM PG. 9

impact, and I'm grateful to be part of that every day."

He thanked their on-air and news teams as well.

"You play a huge role in connecting communities every single day, and you do it with authenticity and care," he said. "Thank you for telling stories that matter. You help keep people informed, engaged, and proud of where we live."

"And to our sales team, you're out there every day building relationships, supporting local businesses, and then helping them grow through partnerships and relationships you create."

Receiving the final award of the night, the Business Excellence Award, was Schnell Industries.

They started out as a family business in a small shop in Plum Coulee. Today they employ nearly 100 people and operate out of a 73,000 sq.

ft. shop in Winkler's industrial park with markets across North America and beyond.

"It was a surprise to get this, and we really appreciate that recognition," said president Brent Dueck.

"What does excellence mean to our team? After 30+ years in business, the meaning to excellence hasn't really changed. It started back before my time at Schnell Industries from one man, my dad, Fred Dueck. He didn't give up and he did not back down."

His line was 'pride and attention to detail' and we still use that to this day.

"To our staff, thanks so much for the hard work and the attention to detail in every little thing that we do. To our community, thanks for believing in our vision and helping us succeed ... as we grew from the small repair shop back in '94 in a small town to the factory floor that we are now. The journey has been real, but so has the energy and support we have felt from this community."



Rooted in Renewal: The Spring Blueprint for Our Backyards and Blocks

The definitive turning point of the year does not arrive with a date on a calendar, but with the unmistakable scent of damp, warming earth. After months of winter hibernation, our neighborhoods are waking up to a collective urge for physical renewal. This season, the traditional spring editorial is not just about appreciation; it is a blueprint for active restoration.

Transformation begins at ground level with the essential spring clean-up. Clearing away the skeletal debris of last year's growth is a therapeutic necessity. Raking away matted leaves and pruning dead wood creates vital breathing room for the soil. This foundational maintenance is the critical starting point that allows our shared landscape to breathe deeply once again.

Simultaneously, the gardening community is channeling this fresh energy into intentional cultivation. Planting seeds in newly turned soil represents an unmatched act of optimism. Whether tending to small patio herb pots or expansive backyard vegetable patches, citizens are ac-

tively nurturing sustainable growth. These green spaces do more than beautify our streets; they provide essential ecosystems for local wildlife and fresh food for our tables.

Beyond the soil, spring triggers a powerful urge to build and fortify. The steady hum of power tools signals a community-wide effort to repair winter damage and create lasting structures. Raising sturdy new fences, assembling raised garden beds, and restoring weath-

ered wooden decks all serve to strengthen our immediate environments.

These individual efforts of cleaning, planting, and constructing quickly ripple outward to transform entire neighborhoods. By rolling up our sleeves and working under the open sky, we do more than improve property values. We actively cultivate pride, foster resilience, and build a vibrant, living testament to our shared future.

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Take a test drive in support of Central Station May 29

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Central Station Community Centre is teaming up with Hometown Ford next weekend for a one-day fundraising event they're hoping will net them \$6,000.

The Winkler Ford dealership has committed to donating \$30 for every test drive (one per household, up to 200 in all) taken between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 30.

"When we look at what are charitable causes in town that have a really good impact on a lot of people, Central Station would be the one that jumps out pretty fast," said Hometown Ford general manager Brian Derksen on why they selected the downtown community centre as the recipient this time around. Past "Drive for Your Community" events have supported local school improvement projects, Katie Cares, and the Imagination Library.

"It's a program where we can involve the community," Derksen said, noting there's no pressure to purchase anything. "People can just have fun, come drive a car that they may

well not have even considered taking a drive in otherwise, unless they were actually really seriously car shopping, and we can get some money into the hands of a good charity at the same time."

The funds will go to support local programs that address housing stability, mental wellbeing, and economic challenges facing many Winklerites today, says Central Station's social impact director Krista Rempel.

"We really appreciate every dollar that comes to Central Station. It all makes a big difference," she says. "And we love to partner with local businesses. This is such a cool event because Ford is the one doing the donating, but our community members get to have part in it without having to necessarily spend anything. It's a win-win for everybody."

Central Station will also have an information booth on-site so attendees can learn more about their work and, if they wish, make a donation.

Pre-registration is not required to take a test drive—simply show up that day.



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Your FARM



Farmers invited to share what's working in new Manitoba wellness study

By Annaliese Meier

With flood risk rising in parts of the Interlake and ongoing pressures from input costs, labour shortages and unpredictable weather, a new Manitoba study is looking to farmers themselves for answers on what supports mental wellness in agriculture.

Researchers with the Centre for Critical Studies of Rural Mental Health at Brandon University are inviting farmers and agricultural service providers across the region to take part in interviews and focus groups aimed at identifying what is already working in farm communities.

The project takes a strengths-based approach — focusing not only on challenges, but on the tools, supports and strategies producers are already using to manage stress and maintain well-being.

“This research is about listening to farmers and ag service providers and learning from what’s already working,” said Tracy Young, research facilitator with the Centre. “Hearing directly from farmers and those who support them is key to shaping meaningful approaches to wellness.”

Young said the study grew out of her experience working directly with producers and farm families.

“Over the last number of years in my work as a mental health clinician in agriculture, I’ve become increasingly familiar with the industry hardships and the risks to mental health for farmers and farm families,” she said. “At the same time, I’ve also seen the importance of reminding people of their purpose — their connection to the land, the animals and the work they do.”

“We hear so much about the downside. Why not take a closer look at the good — the positive, the strengths in farming — and what works to keep the industry growing and thriving?”

Farm families continue to navigate

long hours, financial uncertainty and the increasing complexity of modern agriculture, all of which can take a toll on mental health. In regions like the Interlake, those pressures are often compounded by weather-related concerns such as flooding and delayed

Continued on page 15

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Your FARM

> STUDY, FROM PG. 14

seasons.

Young said the study is not ignoring those realities, but instead aims to highlight resilience within the industry.

"We're not intending to overlook the pressures farmers are facing," she said. "We want to gather the voices of strength and hope and help raise them up, so the industry can be reminded of the promise that agriculture still holds."

In practical terms, the strengths-based approach means focusing on what is already helping farmers cope and succeed.

"We want to know what's working for you — what brought you strength, what gave you purpose, how you keep going and who supports you," Young said. "From there, we can build on those ideas and develop tools that are truly relevant to the industry."

The study will collect stories from both farmers and agricultural service providers, with the goal of identifying supports that can be expanded and shared more widely.

Those insights will be compiled into narratives that highlight resilience in agriculture and used to develop tools and resources for producers in Manitoba and beyond, in partnership with the Do More Agriculture Foundation.

Young said participation from farmers across rural Manitoba is critical to the success of the project.

"Everyone's voice is important. Everyone has a story to tell that could help someone else," she said. "Agriculture can be isolating at times, and if this study can help share that strength across the miles, that alone is a reason to take part."

Farmers, farm employees, family members and agricultural service providers are all encouraged to participate.

Participants are being asked to share their experiences, wellness strategies and perspectives on what supports mental health within the agriculture sector.

More information about the study and how to participate is available online at: youngt@brandonu.ca or by contacting Tracy Young – Principal Investigator for the project at 204-571-8532.

The **Voice**

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REDress Project in Morden Park this Sunday

By Lorne Stelmach

Red Dress Day, observed annually on May 5 in Canada, is the National Day of Awareness and Remembrance for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S+)

It is a day to pause to remember and honour the missing and murdered, and the families and communities left behind to carry their unimaginable loss.

The Pembina Valley REDress Project has had its display of dresses making the rounds in the region all this month, including a stop in Bethel Heritage Park in Winkler May 3 and Swan Lake First Nation May 5. The tour continues in Morden Park this Sunday, May 24.

"Within the Pembina Valley region, the project brings together community members, organizations, schools, and local leaders to promote edu-



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The Pembina Valley REDress Project is touring the region this month.

cation, reflection and meaningful conversations about truth, justice, reconciliation and community re-

sponsibility," shares organizer Denise Unrau-Thiessen. "The installation of red dresses symbolizes the absence of

those who should still be with their families and communities, while also creating space to honour survivors, support families and acknowledge the ongoing impacts of colonialism and systemic violence."

Unrau-Thiessen said they want to encourage people to listen, learn, and take action toward creating safer and more inclusive communities for Indigenous peoples.

"Through community participation, storytelling, education and public engagement, the project aims to foster awareness, empathy and collective responsibility for change," she said, noting they hope people viewing the display will "pause to reflect on the lives represented, honour the families affected, and recognize the importance of standing together against violence and discrimination."

The display will be up in Morden Park from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Keeping kids safe online

By Lorne Stelmach

In speaking to communities and especially students, parents, and caregivers about the dangers of the online world, Val Caldwell is always mindful of the need to take a preventative approach rather than a punitive one.

Above all else, it is about having a strong relationship and having a high level of trust, said Caldwell, who was in the region this past week speaking at a number of schools and community events.

"It's a time of having honest conversation about how to keep kids safe," she said. "For me, honestly, it's more about building a relationship. You can focus on the apps, and you don't have to be an expert on Snapchat or TikTok. You just have to build a relationship with them so that they know if something goes wrong, they can come to you, and they're not going to be in trouble."

Caldwell offered an opportunity to learn about the online world from one of Manitoba's leading presenters on the topic, as she has 18 years of experience in the field.

She provided an overview of the some of the most common concerns for youth in terms of their use of technology and social media and the hidden dangers that all parents, caregivers, and youth should be aware of today, including online bullying, social media's impact on mental health,

and age appropriate use.

Statistics estimate the average Canadian adult spends upwards of 5.65 hours on their mobile devices.

In her presentations, Caldwell asks teens to think of a time they were taking part in an activity they were proud of, and then to raise their hands if at any time during that event they looked to the adults and saw them disengaging and instead staring at their phones. Plenty of hands always go up.

"A lot of kids express feeling like they feel they aren't good enough and if they just did better maybe the adults would want to watch them instead of their phones," Caldwell shared. "I am not sharing this to shame or blame anyone. I am sharing it in the hopes that it will make us all stop and give some serious consideration to our online habits and what we may be missing when we are consuming what the devices are feeding us."

The theme of her presentations this past week was "bridging the gap," as she wants to try to help adults understand what the kids are doing, how some of the apps work, what they may be accessing, and of course touching on the more dangerous side of it when it comes to predatory behaviour.

"I'm trying to help adults have a clearer view of how all this could be impacting kids ... and there's a big emphasis on mental health," she said.



WESTERN SCHOOL DIVISION PHOTO

Western School Division hosted Val Caldwell at Morden Collegiate last week to talk to parents about internet safety and social media awareness.

She understands that it can be hard for parents and caregivers to monitor their children.

"It's difficult for us because kids are smarter than us about it. They know how to work around it all ... they're going to find ways if they want to hide things."

She emphasized the importance, then, of building a good level of trust.

"If something happens, it doesn't matter what it is; it doesn't matter if they downloaded an app they're not supposed to or they snuck on the phone in the middle of the night. The

only thing that matters is that they're safe, and we want them to be able to trust us to come to us," she said, explaining her message to parents is to consider why a child may not feel they can come to them. "What do we need to do to ensure that we're building that relationship? We just really want parents and caregivers to understand the importance of non-judgmental conversations with kids."

Digital algorithms, particularly those in social media and apps, are

getinformed

Dale Gislason receives Lifetime Achievement Award

By Lorne Stelmach

Dale Gislason isn't ready to retire just yet, but he has been recognized for his lifetime of service to his profession.

One of the main partners behind the Winkler-based Gislason Targownik Peters (GTP), Gislason recently received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Chartered Professional Accountants of Manitoba.

An honour like this can sound kind of final, but Gislason still very much enjoys his work and looks forward to what's to come.

"It's about contributing to your clients, and a large number of them become friends," he shared. "Really contributing and being part of their success is really rewarding."

"Accounting is really not just about numbers ... to see your clients succeed is really special."

Gislason arrived in Winkler in 1980 when he was offered the opportunity to help open an accounting office in the small but growing community.

"At the time, I didn't imagine I would spend my entire career here, but the community, the people, and the opportunities made it an easy place to stay."

Gislason's path into accounting began at the University of Manitoba, where he initially set out to become an actuary. Drawn to mathematics and analytical thinking, it seemed a natural fit, but as his studies progressed he realized he was equally interested in the broader context behind them.

"Accounting gave me the opportunity to not only work with numbers, but to understand what they meant," he said. "It combined technical rigour with real-world problem solving, which would help business owners, entrepreneurs and families navigate financial decisions that would shape their future."

After beginning his career at an ac-

counting firm in Winnipeg, he made the pivotal move to join Hermiston, Brent & Co. and relocate to Winkler. There, he helped build what would become Gislason Targownik Peters Chartered Professional Accountants, which is now the largest firm in the Pembina Valley with offices in Winkler, Winnipeg, and Steinbach and a team of nearly 80 people.

Looking back, he attributes the firm's growth to a simple but forward-thinking philosophy.

"We always believed numbers were just the starting point," said Gislason, who was named partner at just 24 years old. "Our role was to help clients understand what those numbers meant and what decisions they should consider next."

At a time when many firms focused primarily on compliance, Gislason and his partners took a more advisory-driven approach, working closely with clients on strategy, growth, and succession planning.

"Financial statements and tax returns are important," he noted. "The real value comes from helping clients understand where they're going, what opportunities exist and what risks to consider."

Over the years, that philosophy helped build lasting relationships across the region. Many of the businesses he advised were in their earliest stages when he first met their owners, and he later helped guide them through expansion, transition, and long-term planning.

"One of the most rewarding parts of this profession is watching a business grow from humble beginnings into something successful," Gislason reflected. "Being part of that journey is incredibly meaningful."

As the firm expanded, so did his appreciation for the people behind its success.

"No firm grows because of one person," he emphasized, noting their

success has always been rooted in teamwork. "It happens because of talented people who care about the work and about their clients. I have been fortunate to work alongside exceptional partners and colleagues."

Beyond his practice, Gislason has played an influential role in shaping the accounting profession through his work with the Certified General Accountants Association of Manitoba and the Certified General Accountants Association of Canada.

At the time, the profession was examining how Canadian accounting designations could remain competitive and credible in an increasingly global environment, and he chaired a national task force that recommended introducing a university degree requirement for CGA students.

"We recognized that professional standards needed to evolve," Gislason explained. "The goal was to ensure that Canadian accounting credentials remained respected, both nationally and internationally."

Among the group's most significant achievements was negotiating a partnership with the University of Calgary, allowing CGA students to apply their professional course work toward a university degree and pursue both concurrently. The model was later adopted by other institutions, including Athabasca University.

"It created a more practical path forward," Gislason noted. "People could build their careers and complete their education."

Despite his many professional commitments, Gislason has always believed in giving back to the community that supported his career. For nearly two decades, he was a member of the Kinsmen Club of Winkler, eventually serving as president. He has also dedicated many years to his church community and contributed to numerous local initiatives.

More recently, he joined the board



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Dale Gislason has been recognized for his accomplished career by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Manitoba.

of the Southern Health-Santé Sud and serves as a deputy chief commissioner with the Manitoba Tax Appeals Commission.

"If you are fortunate enough to build a career in a community, you have a responsibility to contribute to it," Gislason said.

Receiving a lifetime achievement award is quite an honour, and a humbling one.

"You don't often get recognized by your peers, so it was really quite humbling. It's really very nice," Gislason said. "We've been pretty fortunate to have a great group of partners and staff ... early on, we decided we weren't going to sweat the small stuff. I think that philosophy has done well for us."

"Accounting isn't really about numbers," he again emphasized. "It's about people, their goals, their challenges and the decisions that shape their lives. The numbers simply help tell that story."

> CALDWELL, FROM PG. 16

intentionally designed to mirror the psychological mechanics of slot machines, Caldwell stressed. This design strategy is often called addiction architecture, or attention engineering. Social media platforms use these tactics to keep people of all ages en-

gaged.

Parents need to be aware of the addictive nature of these platforms, while also remaining vigilant in protecting their kids from the darker elements that are out there.

"I think parents sometimes prepare kids for monsters, and a lot of these online, clearly they are monsters, but

they become whatever the kid needs ... it becomes grooming," Caldwell said. "They come across as friendly and kind and helpful and caring, so you really need to change the conversation about stranger danger."

Caldwell has consistently received encouraging feedback to her presentations.

"Consistently, in every community I'm in, we don't always get the biggest turnout ... the adults in the room, every single one says the gym should be full. Everybody should be hearing this," she said. "I think there's still some barriers."

Student art on display at Winkler Arts and Culture

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The work of the next generation of artists is on display at Winkler Arts and Culture this month.

The Park St. gallery launched its annual High School Art Show May 14, showcasing pieces from Gr. 9-12 students from both Garden Valley Collegiate and Northlands Parkway Collegiate.

"Every year, at about the same time of year, we get as much art from the high schools as we can," says gallery program assistant Katie Bueckert, explaining it's an opportunity for them to "show what the young minds in the community actually have in store and just how much talent is here. It's quite amazing."

Checking out the show's opening reception with her family was Dylan Morgan, a Gr. 9 student at NPC.

Her contribution to the exhibition was a pencil portrait of Olympic figure skater Alysa Liu.

"I skated as a kid, and I wanted



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

NPC Gr. 9 student Dylan Morgan with her portrait of figure skater Alysa Liu (top row, second from left), on display at Winkler Arts and Culture as part of the 2026 High School Art Show.

to do someone who actually meant something to me," she shares. "I think she's really cool. She retired and then came back to it."

Liu won gold at the 2026 Winter Olympics in both the women's singles and team events.

Morgan's piece features a photo of Liu's face on one side and then a pencil sketch of the other half of her face on the other.

It was an interesting assignment, says Morgan.

"I don't do portraits often or realism or anything, but it was fun."

She encourages the community to come check out the exhibition, which includes everything from paintings to pottery to digital art.

"It's all beautiful, and it's important because students are putting themselves out there and it's not easy," Morgan says. "They've all done an amazing job."

The show will be up at the WAC until June 6.

Pembina Hills Gallery also hosting high school art show

By Lorne Stelmach

The annual art exhibit of work by students from the four Morden-Winkler high schools always offers the youth an interesting challenge.

They are presented with a theme, but how they choose to interpret that idea—in this case, "strings"—can widely vary, and it is always interesting for Garden Valley Collegiate art teacher Scott Bell to see the end results.

"It's always fun to see how the students try to tackle these creative challenges," said Bell, who stopped in at the Pembina Hills Gallery in Morden for the opening of the exhibit last Thursday.



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

GVC student Avea Henderson is excited to be part of the regional high school art show now on display at the Pembina Hills Gallery.

"They have a variety of different approaches to how they present this idea," agreed gallery director Anna Ishkhanyan. "I think it is particularly interesting because they have very fresh eyes ... they are trying different techniques, and the variety in this exhibition is amazing. Their mediums are different; their techniques are different, and their approach to the art is different, so it is interesting."

Avea Henderson, a student from Garden Valley Collegiate, said it was exciting to be part of the show.

"It's pretty cool," she said. "I just never thought I would be part of an art show until now."

She explained how she incorporated actual string into her piece, which offers a profile.

"I just thought it would be a cool idea, and I didn't think anyone else would do something exactly like this ..."

Diana Stepurko, a student from Northlands Parkway Collegiate, created an artwork that includes string connecting various smaller pieces that make up the overall work.

"I was surprised ... I never thought about my art being on display in a gallery," she said. "I'm happy to be part of it. I hope people like it."

Bell noted how the exhibit is very much student-directed in many ways.

"I like the collaborative aspect of it, not just within our classes but amongst the schools in our region," he said.

"The decision-making process, coming to a consensus on a shared theme, is won-

derful," Bell added. "It's the back and forth between the students and the schools, posing ideas, and once we settle on an idea, exploring the multitude of interpretations that central theme could have, and then when the kids actually put those ideas into action in their art, it's great."

"We ask the students for thematic ideas, and they propose ideas ... and the more concise, the better," he shared, noting it is then put to a vote.

Bell liked how a lot of the students incorporated 3D elements; many of the pieces are multimedia works.

"Some students took that on as the idea, and other students decided it was a good opportunity to try to do some textile art and create some of their pieces literally from strings," he said. "You see a lot of work in this show that's not strictly just drawing or painting or sculpture but a combination of multiple elements."

There is a great challenge for them to do their best work

"It's a great opportunity for them," Bell said. "As I explain the assignment to them, I tell them this is a professional gallery. This is a great privilege to have the opportunity to have your work up on the wall here."

"There's a thriving art community here in Morden, Winkler and Altona ... it's nice for them to realize that this is a community that they can continue to be a part of here."

"I think these students are really very talented artists, and I think some of them could pursue artistic careers in the future," said Ishkhanyan.

Suncatch Sounds kicks off Friday with Lowstake Affection

By Lorne Stelmach

The heart of downtown Morden will come alive again a half dozen times this summer with the annual Suncatch Sounds concert series.

The season kicks off this Friday with the band Lowstake Affection in the Suncatch Plaza on 8th Street behind the Pembina Hills Gallery.

"This year's rendition of Suncatch Sounds will look very similar to years past. It is of course free and open to all ages," said Aiden Friesen, event co-ordinator for the City of Morden. "We're focused this year on bringing this event to the community in a reliable and reputable fashion."

Friesen feels they have a good and varied lineup set in place for the year.

The series continues June 12 with Thomas Gut followed July 3 by The Raspberry Jam, July 24 with Dub City, Aug. 14 with Sun Sets West, and Sept. 11 with Radio Static.

"We have many new bands performing this year playing all styles of music from classic rock, country and blues," said Friesen. "The series

creates a great opportunity for local artists to get their name out into the community and an opportunity for the community to come together to enjoy themselves and the music.

"And there's no reason to go hungry at these events either. We will have food trucks on site as well for the concerts," he said. "I would encourage everyone to check our website and social media the week of the event to find out more details on food specifics.

Suncatch Sounds has really taken hold in the community, Friesen said.

"This series has been well attended in previous years, and we are hoping to build off that this year. Attending these events is a great way to support and grow our community, and what better place to do that than downtown Morden?"

Each show starts at 7 p.m. and will end around 10 p.m.

And the bar service is still in support of the Pembina Hills Arts Council, which will be serving at all six shows over the course of summer.

"I'm told they are working on re-



VOICE FILE PHOTO

The Suncatch Sounds concert series starts this week in Suncatch Plaza in downtown Morden.

freshing their bar menu for this year so there may be some new changes to the drink menu this summer," says

Friesen, "but you'll have to come and see for yourself."

Taking a scholarly look at our meat-eating habits

By Lorne Stelmach

A lecture at the Winkler library last week focused on meat consumption, with the question "Are we eating like there's no tomorrow?"

The presentation through Providence University College explored the ecological, ethical, and health-related implications of a meat-rich diet.

"We here in North America eat more meat per capita than the rest of the world, so meat is really a big part of many North American diets," said Rebecca Dielschneider, associate professor and health science chair in the school's natural and social science department.

Dielschneider noted a few of their professors got to talking sometime ago about meat, so they thought why not address it in a public scholarship event.

"We really wanted to have this conversation in a rural setting where food is produced, where animals graze, because we felt like that was definitely an audience of people who would be interested in this topic," she said of their decision to host the talk in Winkler.

Dielschneider said they thought this

topic was one that would generate a lot of conversation.

"There's certainly a lot of media stories that I come across about food, about sugar sweetened beverages, about trans-fat, about meat, and I think there's a lot of studies that are done in these areas, and I think there's a lot of interest from the general public about these topics, but it can be confusing.

"As our population continues to grow, as our climate continues to change and as our health continues change various different ways, I think meat impacts all of these areas," Dielschneider added. "It's important to talk about what we eat, particularly the meats that we eat and the impacts, the pros and the cons."

Dielschneider suggested people in general are more mindful now of issues around food, and her area of health science looks at connections to things like the rise of various chronic diseases.

"There are so many studies that have shown interesting links to food ... just as they continue to research health," she said. "We're also looking at diet is really important, and as chronic dis-

eases just continue to get more and more prevalent, I think the public is more interested in ways that they can prevent them my modifying diet and various other aspects of their life."

Various studies will offer differing views, she acknowledged, so it is important for people to consider their source of information.

"I think for the general public, I would just really encourage them to reach out and ask questions," Dielschneider said, suggesting people can often even find experts in their own communities.

Dielschneider was encouraged to have an audience that was fully involved in the conversation.

"My general sense was that the audience was very engaged, very interested ... it was really just a fruitful time together."

And Dielschneider noted how people come together around food and especially meat, so they would like to change the conversation.

"Maybe I'll challenge people to think a little about how other foods can bring us together in just as meaningful ways," she said. "Broccoli gets such a bad rap, but maybe there are

ways we can come together as a community around other foods as well as we diversify our diets for various different reasons."

She hopes to contribute to shift that a little bit and "encourage people to not give up meat entirely but at least reduce it, because many studies have shown some significant health gains if we were to even reduce our meat consumption by let's say 30 per cent."

"And of course there's also lots of plants that can be a source of protein," she added. "So if people are looking to still maintain a high protein diet but eat less meat, there are many options that they can add into their diet."

One speaker at the Winkler event even touched on Biblical ethics around meat consumption and how people are not required to eat meat from a Christian perspective and how abstaining from meat can be a form of fasting.

In the end, they just hope to stimulate further thought and discussion about issues like this.

"We just want the public to know that we are invested in scholarship like this," Dielschneider said.

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sports & recreation



PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

The Altona Bisons and the Pembina Valley Orioles squared off in Winkler last Wednesday, with the Orioles getting the win 5-4. Right: Altona's Lochlan Rempel is called out at second on the force out throw to Pembina Valley's Teemu Peters. Above: While the batter runs to first base, Bisons shortstop Hayden Janzen gets the force out at second base ahead of the sliding Oriole Ryan Peters. Below: Orioles Jackson Friesen celebrates his two-run homer with teammates.



Orioles, Bisons take the field

By Lorne Stelmach

Neither the Pembina Valley Orioles or Altona Bisons had great starts to the new Manitoba Junior Baseball League season this past week.

The Orioles dropped both ends of a doubleheader with the Elmwood Giants 7-4 and 9-8 opening weekend, but rebounded to pick up their first win by edging the Bisons 5-4 last Wednesday.

Altona meanwhile is winless in three as they also fell 6-0 and 10-5 Sunday to the St. Boniface Legionaires.

In game one with Elmwood, four runs in the top of the fifth made the difference for the Giants as they came

into that inning trailing 4-2.

In game two, the Giants had taken a 9-2 lead in the fifth inning then survived a late comeback by the Orioles, who actually outhit Elmwood 9-5. Jaren Hildebrand, Chris Peters and Harden Friesen each had two hits for Pembina Valley, while Friesen took the loss in allowing four runs on just one hit but walking five over five innings.

Against Altona, the Orioles drove in two runs in the bottom of the sixth to earn the slight win over the Bisons, while hits were 5-3 in favour of Pembina Valley. Jackson Friesen tripled to drive home the two runs for the mar-

gin of victory. Sam Blatz earned the win in allowing three hits and four runs over six innings.

In game one with St. Boniface, the Bisons actually had a 7-5 edge in hits but were unable to drive home any runs. Dillan Thiessen had two hits, and Logan Lesser took the loss in allowing four runs on four hits in four and two thirds innings.

The Legionaires came out strong in game two in taking a 5-0 lead in the top of the first with the help of a

three-run home run, and they had a 9-7 edge in hits over Altona. Thiessen was on the mound for Altona, allowing three runs on four hits in two innings.

Coming up, the Bisons visit Winnipeg South Wednesday and then head to Carillon for a Sunday doubleheader with the Sultans. The Orioles meanwhile head north to the Interlake for a Sunday doubleheader with the Blue Jays.

Central Energy roundup

By Annaliese Meier

The Central Energy U17 squad highlighted the week for the organization after earning a split against the Eastman Wildcats during Manitoba Premier AAA Softball League action.

Playing in La Salle May 17, Central Energy dropped the opener 10-5 before responding with a strong offensive performance in the second game to secure a 16-9 victory.

The U17 team will be in Morden Saturday to face the Manitoba Angels at noon and 2 p.m. and then head to Swan Lake Sunday to play Interlake.

The Central Energy U19 team did not see game action this past weekend af-

ter its scheduled opening games were postponed because of cold weather.

The squad will now open their season May 29 with a doubleheader against the Eastman Wildcats in Friedensfeld before playing the Westman Magic in Winkler the next day.

At the U13 level, Central Energy did not take the field this past week as the team prepares for the next stretch of league play. They will play next on May 30 with a doubleheader against the Eastman Wildcats in Friedensfeld.

The Central Energy U15 team also had a quiet week on the schedule and will not return to league action until later in June.



Car Show on the Ridge returns Saturday, May 23

Fifth annual Woodridge event continues to fuel community projects

By Annaliese Meier

What began as a grassroots fundraiser has grown into a signature spring event for southeastern Manitoba, with the fifth annual Car Show on the Ridge set to return May 23.

Hosted by the Woodridge Community Club in partnership with the Woodridge Firefighters Association, the event will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Woodridge Community Centre and M.A. Queral Community Park.

Now in its fifth year, the show has raised more than \$28,000 since its inception in 2022, supporting a range of community projects and emergency services.

Funds raised in previous years have gone toward the purchase of a community-accessible automated external defibrillator, renovations to the Golden Star Games Room, construction of a heated ice rink shelter and the acquisition of firefighting equipment, including a thermal imaging camera and wildland gear.

Organizers say the event continues to grow thanks to strong volunteer support and participation from car enthusiasts across Manitoba.

"We've had an incredible response over the years," organizers noted. "It's an opportunity to bring people together to share their passion for ve-

hicles while raising funds that directly benefit the community."

This year's fundraising goal will support additional firefighting equipment for the Woodridge Fire Department, along with continued upgrades to the community centre.

Among those planning to take part is local car enthusiast Richard Schellenberg, who will be showcasing his 1950 Chevy pickup — a project more than a decade in the making.

"I've owned this particular truck for the last 12 years and have been working on it for 12 years and counting — they're never done," Schellenberg said.

The truck carries deep personal meaning. His late grandfather once owned the same model, purchased new in the 1950s in a similar shade of blue.

"I do still have his original tailgate that we found in his old barn on the farm," he said. "We made a custom tailgate bench out of it, which he got to enjoy."

Rather than a traditional restoration, Schellenberg describes the build as a "rustoration," blending modern mechanical upgrades with the truck's original exterior.

"In my opinion you only get factory paint once, and mother nature just fine tunes it to perfection as the years go by," he said.

The process of updating a vehicle more than 75 years old comes with challenges, from sourcing parts to retrofitting modern components.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Classic cars, trucks and specialty vehicles line up during the annual Car Show on the Ridge in Woodridge, drawing enthusiasts and families for a day of community fundraising and automotive appreciation.

"It takes out-of-the-box thinking, patience and mechanically inclined friends to pull off something like this," he said.

For Schellenberg, the reward comes not only from the finished product but from the reaction it draws.

"Showing my vehicles gives me a feeling of pride," he said. "All the hard work, parts hunting, late nights, head scratching and bruised knuckles is all worth it when you see people gawking and taking pictures."

He added that the experience often sparks connections with others.

"This usually leads to hearing a story about 'the truck' their grandpa or father had on the farm," he said.

The event will feature a wide range of vehicles, including classic and vintage cars, trucks, motorcycles, hot rods and specialty builds. Car show registration is by donation and includes a souvenir dash plaque and entry into a prize draw, while public admission is free.

In addition to the vehicle showcase, attendees can enjoy a full day of activities, including a BBQ lunch, beer garden, tailgate swap meet, silent auction, 50/50 draw and a "Chase the Ace" fundraiser.

Music will be provided throughout the day, and the Woodridge Fire Department will host a display highlighting its equipment and operations.

Awards will be presented in several categories, including best car and truck, best bike, best import, best rat rod, best other and a people's choice award.

Organizers say the show is as much about community connection as it is about cars.

"This event is a win-win," they said. "Vehicle owners get to showcase their pride and joy, and the community comes together to support meaningful local initiatives."

The event will take place rain or shine, with a rain date scheduled for May 24.

Morden Thunder duo are athletes of the week

By Voice staff

A Morden duo of athletes are the May 13 Dairy Farmers of Manitoba Athletes of the Week.

The Manitoba High School Athletic Association announced Morden Collegiate's Logan Speers and Rylee Thiessen as last week's winners.

The pair continued their undefeated regular season by capturing the Zone IV girls doubles championship. They

won all three tournaments they entered this season and went through the Zone IV Regionals and Zones without losing a set.

The Gr. 11 students have played together for the past three years, and continued their successful season at the provincials as consolation finalists.

Both have been able to maintain a 93.5 per cent average as well.



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Request for Proposals (RFP) will be received by the RM of Morris Office located at 207 Main Street North, Box 518, Morris, MB, R0G 1K0 or by email cao@rmofmorris.ca up to **2:00 pm local time on Friday, July 3rd, 2026** for the following:

The opportunity to purchase and develop approximately 57.19 acres of usable RM of Morris owned Property located on the South-West side of the Rosenort. Total of 71.12 acres with 13.93 acres described as 'Brush/Scrub' or 'Creek Conservation Land'. The intent of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to identify development concepts that contribute positively to the long-term economic and community development of Rosenort and the surrounding municipality.

RFP Documents are available on the RM of Morris website: rmofmorris.ca under "Updates" or by request from the CAO by email: cao@rmofmorris.ca

The lowest bid or any RFP not necessarily accepted. This RFP process was designed for respondents to propose ideas and deliver solutions for the Lands. The Developer with the best overall development program will be selected for further negotiation and will enter into a development agreement with the RM of Morris.

Wes Unrau, CAO

OBITUARY

Will Friesen



With sadness, but thankful for a life well lived, we announce the passing of Will Friesen on May 7 after a short stay at Boundary Trails Hospital.

Will Friesen was raised on the farm in the district of Blumstein near Winkler alongside his 10 siblings in the fields, gardens, barns and pastures typical of the self-sufficient family farms of that era. He attended grade school in Blumstein and high school in Winkler.

Will married Irmgard Paetkau on August 16, 1964. They started married life together in a new house that they built on the Friesen farm ready for its eventual move to 7th street in Winkler. Will and Irmgard actively participated in the Bergthaler Church for over 61 years undertaking a lifelong learning of living the Christian faith.

Will thoroughly enjoyed playing various sports with lifelong friends for decades. He regularly went to many of the coffee spots around Winkler and would join anyone who welcomed his company.

He is survived by his loving wife, Irmgard; son Greg (Lauren), son Gerald, daughter Lori (Troy); granddaughters Alyssa (Cody), Chloe, Jaelyn, Chelsea; great-granddaughter Maeve; one sister (Susan), one brother (George); and many in-laws, nephews and nieces.

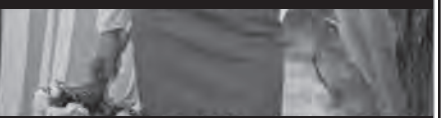
Will was laid to rest at Westridge Memorial Gardens, followed by a memorial service at the Winkler Bergthaler Church on Wednesday, May 13, 2026.

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Thinking of Running for **School Trustee** in the Garden Valley School Division?

Consider attending the **GVSD Trustee Campaign Information Session** on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. at the Winkler Library (160 Main Street).

Serving as a school trustee is a meaningful way to contribute to your community and support student success. Join us to learn more about:

- Structure of Manitoba's education system
- Role and responsibilities of a school trustee in GVSD
- How to run for school trustee
- Q & A session

If you have any questions before the session, please contact us at gvsd@gvsd.ca

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