

The Winkler Morden Voice

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DECEMBER 11, 2025
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Power of PJs

Sophie Gerbrandt (left) from Genesis House and Winkler Library clerk Britany Morgan with the dozens of cozy pyjamas this year's Power of PJs donation drive collected for the women's shelter. For the full story, see Pg. 2.

PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

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“It’s big for them to know that there’s people in the community that are thinking about them”

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Southern Manitoba came through for Genesis House in a big way during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The regional shelter for the victims of domestic violence put out its annual November call for donations of pyjamas, comfy clothing, socks, and slippers for both adults and kids, setting up donation drop-off points at the South Central Regional Library branches in Winkler, Morden, Altona, Miami, and Manitou.

Last week, shelter reps picked it all up—and it was quite the haul.

The final tally, shared Sophie Gerbrandt, resource development manager at the shelter, was 51 pairs of adult PJs, 67 children’s PJs, and several more bags full of other comfy accessories.

“It is huge for us,” she said. “Every woman and child who comes into the shelter gets a fresh pair of pyjamas when they walk in so they feel comfortable and at home.”

This past year the shelter has provided safe haven to over 60 women and nearly 70 children, some of whom arrive on their doorstep with not much more than the clothes on their backs.

“They often come with very little,” Gerbrandt said. “If people are leaving in an emergency, they’re not having time to pack a lot.”

“To get a pair of PJs or a blanket or something, it’s

big for them to know that there’s people in the community that are thinking about them, that they’re not alone in that moment,” she noted. “And who doesn’t love cozying up in a fresh pair of pyjamas, right?”

The results of this annual donation drive takes the shelter through much of the following year.

“This is perfect timing because our shelves are looking empty about now,” Gerbrandt shared. “So it’ll be great for us to restock for the year ahead.”

Genesis House is grateful to the libraries for helping them with the annual donation drive.

“We don’t have a storefront, so you can’t just stop by the shelter,” Gerbrandt said. “So what’s huge for us is to be in all of these communities across southern Manitoba like this, so that people can hear about us and get involved.”

Winkler Library clerk Britany Morgan said SCRL is pleased to be part of the campaign.

“It’s a chance to give back to the community,” she said. “We love to help out, and it’s absolutely needed.”



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE
The annual campaign brought in 51 pairs of women’s PJs and 67 pairs for kids, along with other comfy accessories.

FETB collects 2,100 lbs of food



The numbers are in and it was a good year indeed for Winkler’s living nativity. Organizers at the Winkler EMMC shared last week that they welcomed 2,430 visitors over the three-day production of From Everywhere to Bethlehem, which transformed Winkler Park into ancient Bethlehem Nov. 28-30. A whopping 2,100 pounds of food was donated in lieu of admission, all of it going to the help the Winkler and District Food Cupboard feed families in need this holiday season.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OVER THE PAST YEAR!

Chocolate Mustache campaign raises \$18,412 for BTHC

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The fifth annual Carman Collegiate Chocolate Mustache fundraiser was another smashing success, raising \$18,412 for cancer care at Boundary Trails Health Centre.

Project leader Mary Reimer, principal at the high school, stopped by BTHC last week to present the proceeds raised through the sale of thousands of homemade chocolate goodies this fall.

This year's tally brings the five-year total to \$70,163.

"As always, we commit every single dollar that we earn to cancer care

here at Boundary Trails," Reimer said, sharing the campaign got its start following a friend's cancer diagnosis.

"I had done a much smaller campaign the year before because a friend of mine was diagnosed with colon cancer. That money was only \$1,500, donated to CancerCare Manitoba.

"The following August I was diagnosed with breast cancer and received treatment here at Boundary Trails, and so the fundraiser meant a little different the second year because I was going through treatment," Reimer said. "It hit a little closer to home."

Continued on page 9



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Carman Collegiate principal Mary Reimer (left) presented BTHC Foundation executive director Shannon Samatte-Folkett with the proceeds of this year's Chocolate Mustaches campaign last week. The funds will go to support the hospital's cancer care ward.



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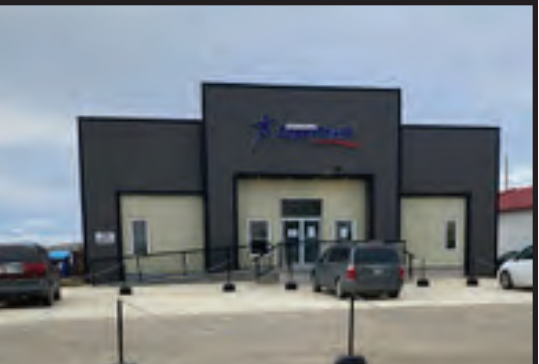
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Buy a blessing meal at King's Deli in Winkler

By Ashleigh Viveiros

A Winkler restaurant is giving people the opportunity to pay Christmas kindness forward this month.

King's Deli Market and Eatery last week launched its second annual blessing meal program. For a \$15, you can gift someone in need with a hearty meal.

"We started this last year and we did over 500 meals," shared owner Colton Schiller, noting things were already well on their way just a few days after opening up donations this year. "This is our first week and we probably have 50 or 60 meals paid for already."

The restaurant is partnering with local charities—Central Station Community Centre, Genesis House women's shelter, and the like—to ensure the pre-paid vouchers go to where they're most needed.

"Imagine if you're a family, you have little kids, and you never go out to eat because you just can't afford it," Schiller said. "And now, suddenly, you as a family of four or whatever can go out and eat, get a special meal, because the community has paid for it."

It's not just about charity, he stressed, but about the community showing love for its most vulnerable members.

"A person came into the deli and they bought you lunch. How great is that?"

The meal vouchers can be used by recipients any time over the next several months.

"Whenever it makes sense for them to come," Schiller said.



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

King's Deli launched its blessing meal program for the holidays last week. You can purchase a meal for someone in need for just \$15, explains owner Colton Schiller

The outpouring of support this initiative received in its first year doesn't surprise Schiller.

"I was very proud of our community," he said. "In all our social media and everything, we talk about the King's Deli family—we're a family here, we have a very, very loyal

customer base. And as part of that, I'm just very proud of what we were able to do with this."

Every single gift makes a difference, whether you wish to sponsor one meal or many.

"We'd have a community leader come through, they're here for lunch or whatever, and they're

like, 'How much for 10?'" Schiller recalled. "People were generous."

"I think it would be really cool if we got to 750 this year," he added. "That's a lot of families."

Stop by King's Deli anytime in December to buy a blessing meal.

"I WAS VERY PROUD OF OUR COMMUNITY."

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Morden Fire reaches rink reno fundraising goal

By Lorne Stelmach

The Morden fire department reached its fundraising goal to make improvements to the outdoor rink near the courthouse.

It had been estimated the cost would be about \$36,000, and the Morden Area Foundation had offered to match the fundraising if \$18,000 could be raised by Dec. 1.

"It really feels good ... big time," said Andy Thiessen, who just retired as fire chief but had been helping spearhead the fundraising campaign for Morden Fire & Rescue.

"When you set out a goal, you kind of anticipate that you're going to be able to get it, but it was a pretty high goal for us. The community has really stepped forward again, and it is unbelievable," Thiessen said.

For the past 25 years, the outdoor rink beside the courthouse has not just been a place to skate but perhaps more importantly a space for community connection, family memories,

and even firefighter training, Thiessen had explained previously.

"When we set up the rink initially, it was for the community, but selfishly it was for us as well to practice pulling water in the winter time. It's a totally different thing than in the summer," he noted. "So I wanted my pump operators to learn how it works and what needs to be done extra so that things don't freeze up."

"Rather than just spraying it out in the middle of nowhere, we thought we could make it useful, so we thought why not make a rink ... so it was kind of a win-win situation."

Thiessen said the rink gets a lot of use every winter, so it feels good to have the opportunity to really fix it up.

"It's been around for quite a while, and a lot of generations have had a chance to use it, and they're appreciative that there's no cost to it. They are free to just go and use it," he said.

"We try to keep the ice in as good a shape as we can," he added. "I think



VOICE FILE PHOTO

Thanks to support from the community, the rink at the Morden courthouse will be getting a makeover next spring.

over the years, people have appreciated it, and now they had an opportunity to kind of step up to the plate [with donations]."

He anticipates that while they will be able to get the materials and such ready immediately, the work will like-

ly not happen for a few more months.

"I think in spring we could actually do a better job of replacing it and fixing it up," he said. "So there will be one more winter with how it is, and then we will fix it up after that."

The Gift that Keeps Giving



Every year as we approach Christmas people begin the work of deciding what to gift to the ones closest to them. It's not an easy job. Questions arise – how do I know they'll like it? Does it say what I want it to?

Then, next year, the whole process starts all over again. Wouldn't it be nice if you could give a gift that recreates itself as something different every year? A gift that keeps giving in new ways and expresses exactly what you want it to. This is possible.

This past year the Morden Area Foundation gave away more than \$300,000 in grants to local organizations that are working hard to improve life for everyone in Morden. There are scholarships and grants for health care, food programs, important infrastructure and more.

Next year the foundation will do the same, and the best part of it, it does it with the same money. The Morden Area Foundation is literally the gift that keeps on giving and you can be a part of this.

Every donation made to the foundation is invested. The interest on that investment is given away annually. Every dollar you give keeps giving for as long as there's a foundation.

Some people make an annual donation knowing the good it does. Others start scholarships and funds in the name and memory of loved ones so that the joy they gave in life continues.

Christmas is a time that reminds the Morden Area Foundation, its staff and volunteers, of how important giving is in growing community. It's a time of year when the foundation is extra grateful for the gifts it has been given in Christmas past by generous donors without whom none of what they do would be possible.

It's a time of year when thought turns toward donations of Christmas present and how together with gifts of the past they shape an incredible Christmas future for Morden.

With these thoughts in mind the Morden Area Foundation wants to express its deep and ongoing gratitude to donors for the impact they have had and extend an invitation to those wanting to give a gift that never ends – a donation. A donation that will keep working over and over again and giving over and over again.

If you want to know more about the opportunity to give, consider coming out to the Morden Legion for the Morden Area Foundation's AGM and Christmas Party on Dec. 18 at 7 pm. The evening will include the awarding of grants to local organizations and give you an opportunity to talk to Board members and ask questions.

Seasons Greetings from the Morden Area Foundation, consider giving the gift that keeps giving.



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Grants Award Night & Christmas PARTY

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7:00 pm Annual General Meeting and wine & cheese
7:30 pm Announcement of 2025 Fall grant recipients
PLUS celebrate the announcement of new funds developed in 2024-2025 and learn more about the MAF's great work.

This is an evening for the MAF Board members to thank Morden's gracious supporters and visionaries who invest in Morden's future, partner with local charities through grants to build a better future for residents of Morden.

Let's celebrate!

The Voice



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get heard

EDITORIAL > VIEWPOINTS > LETTERS

• FAITH FOCUS

The example of the shepherds

If you were able to meet someone from the Biblical record of the birth of Jesus Christ, who would it be?

I have great admiration for the shepherds. The shepherds were plain folk, who were not given a lot of respect in their society but they had an important job caring for the sheep—including the sheep that were used for sacrifice at the temple.

On this particular night shift an angel appeared to them and they were afraid. In Luke 2:10-14 we read "But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

They recognized that this was a message from the Lord and they chose to hurry to Bethlehem. They found the child with his mother and father and they could not contain themselves—they spread the word that had been told by the angels concerning this child. The people who heard their

testimonies were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

Then "the shepherds returned, (to their field, the sheep, their duties), glorifying and praising God for the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."

The lowly shepherds became the first registered witnesses of God's peace arriving on earth in the physical form of Jesus Christ. I would like to believe that this was a life changing experience for these people of the pasture. Could they ever be the same after they heard the angel's announcement and then saw with their own eyes the child who had been announced to them?

They could have peace in their heart knowing that the great truths of God's promise and presence, previously made known to them by their parents and teachers, were now being fulfilled in the coming of Jesus as a

child in Bethlehem.

We have a need for peace. The world around us is filled with many types of conflict and division. Jesus did not say that every experience in life would be calm and peaceful. He does call us to peace in our relationship with Him through salvation. He also offers us a genuine peace in the midst of each day. An inner calmness of spirit and mind in the middle of the storms swirling around us.

Not long before his death on the cross Jesus said to his disciples: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled

and do not be afraid."

In our pursuits of peace today we should consider the example of the shepherds.

Randy Smart has been a pastor in Southern Manitoba since 1979.

"THE LOWLY SHEPHERDS BECAME THE FIRST REGISTERED WITNESSES OF GOD'S PEACE ARRIVING ON EARTH ..."

Letter policy

The *Voice* welcomes letters from readers on local matters.

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.

Please include your full name, address, and phone number for verification purposes. Your name and city will be published with your letter. We do not print anonymous letters.

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getinformed

20+ years of sales at Gord's Christmas Tree lot

By Lorne Stelmach

It started over two decades ago as a project of a local community service club, and Gord Penner's Christmas tree lot just off Thornhill Street in Morden has continued to be a holiday season tradition.

Penner first became involved in selling trees from the backyard of his home at 202 Seventh Street as an initiative of the Morden Kinsmen Club.

"When the club folded, I decided to continue on with it," Penner said last week as the supply of trees for sale was starting to dwindle.

"It's a thing for the community. People were not sure where else to get trees, so I decided to keep on with it," he said. "We've been doing it ever since, and it's been I think almost 23 years now that we've done it in our yard."

What's kept him going with it is that it seems to matter and be appreciated by people, but it is a quite a commitment to be available and accessible

for sales seven days a week during the Christmas season.

"Sometimes, it gets a little nerve wracking, but when people come, it's usually a lot of fun. It's a bit of a family affair. The kids come out and help sell trees," Penner noted.

"You meet so many people, and it's just a lot of fun. Year after year, I've had people who come since we opened. They've been buying trees from us for 23 years, and every year they come back and buy a tree. They bring their families, and the kids come, so it makes it interesting.

"It's a tradition for some people to come here," he said, acknowledging there perhaps may even be second generations of families who are now coming to buy their Christmas trees from him.

"It's a service for the community," Penner said. "I had one comment once that Christmas isn't here until the Penners put up their Christmas lights and put out the trees."

Penner ordered 150 trees this year;



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Gord Penner has been selling Christmas trees in Morden for over 20 years.

that number has varied over the years. Last year he had 200 but didn't

sell out, while in other years 200 trees were sold by the start of December.

These days he orders in Fraser firs and sheared Balsams, usually getting the trees sometime around Remembrance Day.

"Some people, right after Halloween, they're putting up trees," he said.

"The number of trees has dwindled a bit over the years ... but we're going to keep up with it as long as we can," Penner said.

Customer run the gamut from the measured purchasers to the grab-it-and-goers.

"We get some quick sales, especially when it's cold ... the first tree they see, they grab it and run. Other people, it could be really cold, they'll still come in and browse, check out all the trees."

In the end, Penner said it always feels worthwhile.

"It does. When the kids are running around and they want to pick this one or pick this one. It makes it really interesting, and it's fun ... it feels good."

letters

> Got something you want to get off your chest?

Send your letters to the editor or acts of kindness to news@winklermordenvoice.ca. Please include your name, address, and phone number for confirmation purposes.

TREASURED GIFTS

There was a lack of credible information in the "Making Informed Choices" letter posted in the Dec. 4th issue, which is ironic but worth addressing.

While I am unsure why anyone would take issue with Samaritan's Purse, there seemed to be a subtle and passive suggestion to boycott the charity in the name of the proselytization of children and cultural appropriateness. The reader is instead encouraged to give to "family-friendly" local charities. And while the charities listed in the let-

ter are worthy causes and should be considered, if the writer is truly against proselytization (Christians sharing their faith), perhaps she should stop to consider who started those local charities, who funds them, and why.

In Canada, over \$1.6 billion of charitable giving is donated by religious congregants. Bible believing Christians are passionate about giving to the less fortunate, in an effort to share God's love.

Within 24 hours of a crisis, Samaritan's Purse can be on the ground with fully functioning emergency field hospitals, cargo planes of sup-

plies, and volunteers and staff to help provide shelter, water, hygiene, and clean up to the victims.

In 2024, Samaritan's Purse distributed 11.9 million shoeboxes worldwide to children who may not have otherwise received a present for Christmas. And while we may see the cheap little plastic toys as potential landfill, it is safe to assume that for many of those children, they are valued treasures and a sign that someone cares.

Crystal Hildebrand,
Morden

The **Voice**

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Goldilocks on trial

Northlands Parkway Collegiate drama students were on stage last week to bring *Once Upon a Crime: The Trial of Goldilocks* to life. The production included several dinner theatre shows featuring food made by the school's culinary arts students.

Hiebert seeks to make December Christian Heritage Month

By Voice staff

Morden-Winkler MLA Carrie Hiebert is aiming to recognize Manitoba's diverse, multicultural Christian community.

Hiebert has introduced legislation to mark the month of December as Christian Heritage Month to honour Christians and their contributions to Manitoba's spiritual and cultural heritage.

"As a woman of faith and an MLA, it is a personal honour to bring this forward in the house," Hiebert said. "It is important to bring awareness to the Christian faith and the meaningful role it contributes to Manitoba."

"Christians give back in many ways, through charitable works, community service, support for families, and care for the vulnerable," she said. "My faith continues to guide my service, and I am honoured to help advance this work"

Christians across the province have made and continue to make valuable contributions to the social and humanitarian fabric of Manitoba, Hiebert said.

"By designating December as Christian Heritage Month, the act encourages Manitobans to reflect on and appreciate the enduring contributions of Christianity throughout the province."

"December is an important month in the Christian faith with the observance of Advent, a time of preparation and reflection and the celebration of Christmas, a holiday rooted in family, faith, unity, generosity and love," noted Obby Khan, leader of the Official Opposition.

"What better month than December to recognize the significance of Manitoba's diverse Christian community?" said Hiebert. "It's a time when families across Manitoba come together to celebrate, reflect and give thanks for all we've received."

"Let's celebrate Christian Heritage Month next December and every December going forward."


The Manitoba Legislature wrapped up its fall session Dec. 4. It will reconvene in March.

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"I want to thank the community. You are healing souls."

From Pg. 3

The campaign is Reimer's way of showing her gratitude for the amazing care she received through her cancer journey, and in memory of friends and loved ones who have walked a similar path, some of them losing their battle with the disease.

"I am able to thrive because of cancer care here at Boundary," she stressed, noting she wants staff to know "that the quality of my life is a direct result of their efforts."

The community response the fundraiser receives every year makes all the work that goes into it well worth it.

"My kitchen is a busy place during October and November," Reimer said. "We make them at my home mostly, or in the school's kitchen."

"Our communities are definitely showing just how generous and altruistic they are," she said. "I've got lots of people who are reaching out with orders or asking me if they can make deliveries for me. They're just asking me how they can support, which is lovely."

OMG Candy out of Winnipeg donates the chocolate for the mustaches every year, and The Prices Rite in Carman provides the campaign with the other supplies it needs at cost.

Students throughout the Prairie Rose School Division get involved by buying and selling the chocolates, with classes and entire schools competing to see who can sell the most (this year Roland School won that honour).

"It's really remarkable to see the community and our students and businesses all getting behind the fundraiser to help us raise a little bit of money for cancer care," Reimer said.

BTHC Foundation executive director Shannon Samatte-Folkett said they are so grateful for the efforts of Reimer and for everyone who supports the campaign each year.

"We have people who donate to us online to this fundraiser. They don't want the chocolate, but they want to support us because they relate to Mary's story," she said, noting it's

about so much more than chocolates. "The fundraiser has reached out to many more, and they have given in other ways."

It's a cause that hits especially close to home to Samatte-Folkett this year, as her aunt is battling cancer.

"I'm just seeing it through a different light, and I just want everyone, especially Mary, to know how much this means to me," she said. "I want to thank the community. You are healing souls."

The funds go toward helping the cancer care ward at BTHC get the things it needs to make the treatment experience as comfortable as possible for patients.

"When people donate to cancer care, there isn't always a project right front and centre," Samatte-Folkett explained. "There are many needs throughout the year that we help

with."

The biggest project on the horizon for the ward is a major expansion project slated to get underway next year.

"There will be a lot of equipment, a lot of the extras that we are going to help with," Samatte-Folkett said, "so fundraisers like this are going to go towards the little extras for the patients, for the employees, and we are really excited to see what that is going to look like."

"WE COMMIT EVERY SINGLE DOLLAR THAT WE EARN TO CANCER CARE HERE AT BOUNDARY TRAILS."

Host of measles exposure sites announced

By Voice staff

Public health officials have announced several more measles exposure sites in our area.

Anyone at the following locations on the specified dates and times is asked to monitor for symptoms until the identified date and to contact their health care provider if symptoms occur:

- Boundary Trails Health Centre emergency department at the junction of Provincial Trunk Highway (PTH) 3 and PTH 14, Winkler, on Nov. 30 from

12:25 to 3:30 p.m. Monitor for symptoms until Dec. 22.

- Plum Coulee Co-op Gas Bar at 48 Highway Ave., Plum Coulee, on Nov. 26 from 5 p.m. to 10:15 p.m. Monitor for symptoms until Dec. 18.

- Garden Valley Collegiate, 736 Main St., Winkler on Nov. 26 from 8:25 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. Monitor for symptoms until Dec. 18. Also on Nov. 27 from 8:25 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. Monitor for symptoms until Dec. 19.

- Outpost Grill, at the junction of Provincial Trunk Highway (PTH) 3 and PTH 14 near Winkler on Nov.

29 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monitor for symptoms until Dec. 21.

Continued on page 15



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PHOTOS BY
LORNE STELMACH/
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The Winkler Bible
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The BTHC Foundation extends heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated partners and community donors. As we celebrate 25 years of impact together, your unwavering support enables us to provide quality, compassionate care at Boundary Trails Health Centre. Together, we make a meaningful difference in our community's health and wellbeing. We wish you a joyful holiday season and a happy new year.

With gratitude,
The BTHC Board of Directors,
Shannon and Jennifer



Morden-Winkler Christmas dinners coming up

By Lorne Stelmach

Community Christmas dinners are again happening to bring people together in Winkler and Morden.

Central Station Community Centre will host its holiday gathering on Dec. 22, while Westside Community Church in Morden is hosting a community meal on Christmas Day.

"It's beautiful. It's incredible to see," said Rebecca Thiessen, kitchen co-ordinator at Central Station Community Centre. "It's just to support the community, help people, and make connections."

"For us, it's been meeting a need in the community," noted Gerald Dyck, a pastor at Westside Community Church. "It's for people who are maybe isolated or don't have family in the area and just need a hand or want to just sit with people."

The Morden meal happens Dec. 25 from noon to 2 p.m.. The church has done this for a number of years now to fill the void left when a previous community meal organized by volunteers fell by the wayside.

"It's for anyone who needs a spot of just wants to spend some time with community and get a great meal," said Dyck.

"Everyone has less resources, it seems, and maybe less volunteerism sometimes, so we just kind of took it on," he said, suggesting it is an important thing for the community.

He added it is not just about the meal but perhaps even mores about the fellowship aspect.

"We thought let's see if we can get the volunteers to pull it off, and we have been pleasantly surprised with people who have volunteered to prepare and people who have volunteered to serve and clean-up," Dyck said. "And there's people from the community who are doing that, it's

not just our church doing it. People are volunteering from across the community and really stepping up."

Dyck said it always feels heartening to organize and hold the meal.

"We have been pleasantly surprised every year how quickly our volunteer needs have been filled. Lots of folks actually do have free time on Dec. 25," he noted. "There's lots of folks who say I can give two or three hours, and there's lots of people who are repeat volunteers."

He encouraged people to register and let them know in advance if they may need a ride to the event.

"If anyone has a need or knows of someone who may benefit from a ride, they can email or call our church ... and we also do meal delivery if you need," he added.

Dyck was uncertain of the possible response, but he noted they even had enough extra meals last year that they delivered some food to staff at Boundary Trails Health Centre.

"We made enough food that we were able to meet the evening shift at the hospital."

In Winkler, meanwhile, Thiessen noted their Christmas dinner Dec. 22 aligns with what would normally be the regular Monday night community meal, though they extend the hours to run from 4:30-7 p.m.

"It is our biggest community Café 545 meal. We're anticipating about 600 people this year," she estimated. "It's a come and go meal. That's why we have the extended time ... to accommodate the increase in people."

"People can sign up and call ahead if they would like rides," Thiessen added, noting they will be serving a traditional Christmas meal with ham, meatballs, scalloped potatoes, vegetable, stuffing and dessert.

She stressed it is open to everyone and anyone.



VOICE FILE PHOTO

Morden-Winkler has a couple options for community Christmas meals coming up in the next few weeks.

"Food brings people together ... when you have Christmas and food and community then you have just a fantastic combination."

"We have an incredible wealth of volunteers who come to Central Station on a regular basis," Thiessen added. "We generally have about 20 to 25 volunteers on any given Monday. That number will be up, not quite doubled, but it will be higher definitely on the 22nd."

A third community holiday meal took place this past Tuesday at the Morden Alliance Church, spearheaded by the Many Hands Resource Centre.

"This event was open to everyone. It was simply our way to bring people together, noted executive

director Mariyam Tsygankova.

"We know Morden is home to many different cultures, and this was our way to celebrate that diversity and also our community support. This was also a chance for us to say thank you and celebrate the season together," she added.

It was their fourth year of hosting the dinner, and it is something they very much intend to continue with, Tsygankova said.

"It has become a tradition."

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CITY OF
winkler
DREAM. BUILD. LIVE.

MITT hosts Indigenous technology training workshop

By Lorne Stelmach

A unique initiative last week had people from a number of First Nations from across Manitoba participating in technology training at the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT) program in Morden.

There were participants from Pukatawagan, Sandy Bay, Flin Flon, Kiciwapa, and Leaf Rapids in town for an experience that was a journey of healing as well as learning technology.

"It opens up a lot of hope; it opens up a lot of resilience. This is a really good stepping stone," suggested Brown Eagle Belanger, who had a leading role in the program that included four days of digital workshops.

The initiative started on day one with an opening circle, grounding, meeting youth from the five First Nations, and stepping into AI for the first time. Day two delved into such things as AI and creative tools as well as healing discussions. Day three brought more learning, culture, and healing.

By the end, participants were building and creating websites and Facebook pages and even online business portals to not only benefit themselves but their communities as well.

One of the leaders, Jas Singh, said they wanted to help the participants empower themselves.

"This three-day course allows them to feel more in control of their lives by financially being able to be free at the end," he said.

This level of training and support is often not very accessible in remote communities, Singh said, noting he recognizes the value of this kind of

outreach initiative through his own experience as an immigrant to Canada.

"The community was so nice to me ... it's imperative for us to give back."

The initiative revealed a number of inspiring experiences, such as the 75-year-old man who began with simply learning how to operate a computer but then had a website built by the end of the day.

There was the creation of a Facebook page about healing practices, while another person built an online virtual sweat lodge.

It was not only about how to build these kinds of experiences but then also to monetize them, Belanger noted.

"These financial skills need time to be built," he said.

He saw the initiative as not only dealing with teaching such things as emerging technologies but also perhaps providing a means to help students meet the needs of their communities.

"We want them to have an entrepreneur mindset rather than a user perspective," he said, suggesting how it can have a ripple effect in providing some leadership in important areas.

"Rather than social media becoming a distraction, it builds communities; it builds entrepreneurs," said Belanger. "Education is really important ... there's a lot of knowledge gaps.



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology's Morden campus welcomed students from several Manitoba First Nations last week for a special workshop.

Belanger hoped to at least "give them the exposure ... be able to get their feet wet with this type of technology ... now they can use their skills at home. They can see problems and gaps."

Koby Caribou, a participant from Pukatawagan, enjoyed working on developing a website for his community that will have such features as

schedules and an events calendar.

"It was a fun experience," he said. "This is my first time actually being anywhere other than Winnipeg.

"I've been learning a lot ... this is the first time I've coded," he said. "I feel proud of myself now ... I've made something, a cool app for my community."

Morden boil water advisory lifted

By Lorne Stelmach

The short-term boil water advisory for the City of Morden ended this week.

The City of Morden went

into the boil water advisory on Nov. 24 as a result of construction on the new standpipe at the water treatment plant.

This work briefly disrupted the water system, which required the Province of Manitoba to issue a precautionary boil water advisory until

water quality testing gave the all-clear.

Initially the community was warned the advisory could potentially be in place for several weeks, but it ended up being less than two.

Continued on page 14

Wishing you and your loved ones a very

MERRY Christmas

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." - Luke 2:11

Josh Guenter
MLA for Borderland
info@joshguenter.ca
204.324.8957

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DOELL
LAW OFFICE

Winkler Family Resource Centre throwing New Year's Eve bash

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The countdown at the Winkler Family Resource Centre's Family New Year's Eve Party may take place a few hours earlier than others, but it's no less exciting for the kids taking part.

The centre invites families down to its space at 750 15th St. Dec. 31 from 5-7:30 p.m. to ring in 2026 in style.

"We'll have both a princess and a superhero from A Country Princess out. We're very excited about that. They're usually a big hit," shares executive director Monica Dueck. "And then throughout the evening we'll have music, we have someone coming to do balloon animals, and we'll have different activity stations set up for kids to have fun with—crafts and some cookie decorating, snowman bowling, and hopefully face painting as well."

"We'll also have snacks available for people to have. We've got Valley Bakery supplying some of our snacks, so we're very thankful for that. And then we'll have Domino's Pizza available for purchase, and drinks."

There will also be door prizes courtesy of Other Brother Roasters, Meridian Industries, and Janzen's Paint and Decorating.

"We're going to have grown-up door prizes for the adults and then a few for the kids as well," Dueck says, noting that even if you don't win one of the prizes, everyone will go home

with a goodie bag full of treats and activities.

"It's going to be a fun, casual environment for families to hang out, have something to eat, do some fun activities with their kids, and then at 7:30 we'll do a balloon drop and a New Year's Eve countdown so the kids can participate without having to stay up to midnight."

While WFRC's programs generally target the pre-school age group, Dueck notes this bash is for families with older kids as well.

"Everyone's welcome. We've got activities for, I would say for sure up to 12 or 13 years old, depending, so don't feel that you can only come if you've got pre-schoolers. We've got stuff that kids of all ages will enjoy."

This event is made possible every year thanks to the generous local businesses who support it. Including the aforementioned ones, Jim M. Smith Chartered Professional Accountants are also a major sponsor of this year's party.

"We've got quite a few businesses from the community helping us out, and we're really grateful for that," Dueck says. "I know everybody's feeling the pinch a little bit this year, so it makes it extra special that they're able to help us out"

Admission is \$10 per person (regardless of age). Pre-registration is required by Dec. 19 online at wfrc.ca.



VOICE FILE PHOTO

The Winkler Family Resource Centre will ring in the new year at its Family New Year's Eve Party the early evening of Dec. 31. There's a host of fun activities for kids of all ages planned.

May that heartwarming Christmas spirit reside with each of you!



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The Voice

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Guns 'N Hoses vs. Thunder game supports Christmas Cheer



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

The Morden Thunder high school hockey team faced off with the Guns 'N Hoses team made up of Morden police and firefighters Monday evening in what has become an annual tradition. Admission was free with the donation of an unwrapped toy or non-perishable food item for the Morden Christmas Cheer Board, which had volunteers on hand (above, left) to gratefully accept every donation. A final tally of how much was raised was not yet available at press time.

City of Winkler utility workers join CUPE

By Voice staff

The City of Winkler's utility operators are the newest members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

CUPE Manitoba announced last week that the Winkler workers voted to join the union following a successful card-signing campaign under the provincial government's card check legislation.

"WE WANT TO WELCOME THESE NEW MEMBERS TO CUPE."

CUPE already represents a wide range of municipal workers across southern Manitoba, including those at the City of Morden.

"We want to welcome these new members to CUPE," said Gina McKay, president of CUPE Manitoba. "I know we are stronger together as workers and CUPE members, and look forward to working together to improve working conditions for all workers in Manitoba."

With these new members, CUPE continues to strengthen its presence in the municipal sector, representing more than 5,000 municipal workers across the province.

CUPE is Canada's largest union representing more than 800,000 members. In Manitoba, it represents approximately 40,000 members working in health care facilities, per-

sonal care homes, home care, school divisions, municipal services, social services, disability support services, child care centres, public utilities, libraries, and family emergency services.

> WATER, FROM PG. 12

"Everything went according to plan. It went well," noted Mayor Nancy Penner.

She said they appreciated the understanding and cooperation of residents as they completed this critical infrastructure upgrade to improve Morden's water storage and supply system.

"The new standpipe will be bringing better quality water to the city," Penner explained. "It will be providing better pressure and helping with the quality and safety of our water ... and it will help ensure we can continue to meet all of the standards that are required."

The old standpipe had served well but was very much due for replacement, the mayor said.

"It's an important part of the city providing the best quality and safest drinking water that we can."



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The **Voice**

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Local air cadets receive honours

By Lorne Stelmach

The Morden air cadet squadron had esteemed visitors recently, and the commanding officer saw it as an honour that very much reflects the success of the program here.

On Dec. 1, the Morden squadron welcomed Lieutenant-Colonel Jennie Deutscher, CD, Commanding Officer, and Chief Warrant Officer James Sandall, CD, representing the Regional cadet Support Unit for the northwest, which takes in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the Yukon.

"This was a huge honour for our squadron and a very rare occurrence," said commanding officer Roxanne Maynard, who also received an award that night for her years of service in the Canadian Armed Forces.

"The cadets worked hard on their drill and getting their uniforms up to snuff and to be looking their best and behaving their best for the lieutenant colonel," Maynard shared. "It was a great evening, and the cadets did great. It was cadets leading cadets, and they were able to show that on that evening."

The air cadet program usually includes a commanding officer's parade, but this one was obviously a bit special.

"It's very rare that we get a visit from a commander like that," said Maynard. "In my career, the only time

I had a lieutenant colonel come down to a squadron was when there was a change of command ... and I've been part of the military now and involved with this for 13 years, so it's something special."

Maynard reflected on the success of the Morden squadron, which is now at 61 cadets—a number that she sees as quite noteworthy.

"That's getting quite big ... for a rural squadron, that's quite large," said Maynard, who noted the program is open to youth from age 12 to 18.

"They come from all over the place. Some come from Winkler, some come from St. Joseph and St. Jean. We have some come from Carman and even some from the western part of the province as well," she said. "They come from quite a large circle."

Maynard offered her thoughts on what might draw youth to become an air cadet.

"I think a lot of it is being a group, working together as a group," she said. "When they come to cadets, they're wearing the uniforms. They all look the same. They're not necessarily at the same level, but they're all able to come here and learn things together ... learn things about teamwork and have the camaraderie with other cadets."

"We also try to do community service, and we have different optional training," she noted, citing the exam-



PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Lt. Col Jennie Deutscher inspected the Morden squadron of air cadets earlier this month. Right: Brady Wolfe received the medal of excellence for his involvement in the program.

ple of learning marksmanship. "We're also looking into the possibility of building a band again."

"They just love it. By the time they age out of the program they're used to organizing activities and providing supervision," said Maynard. "They're basically ready to go adults and to go into the world and make the world a better place."

Brady Wolfe, who has been in the air cadets for five years, received a medal of excellence at the ceremony.

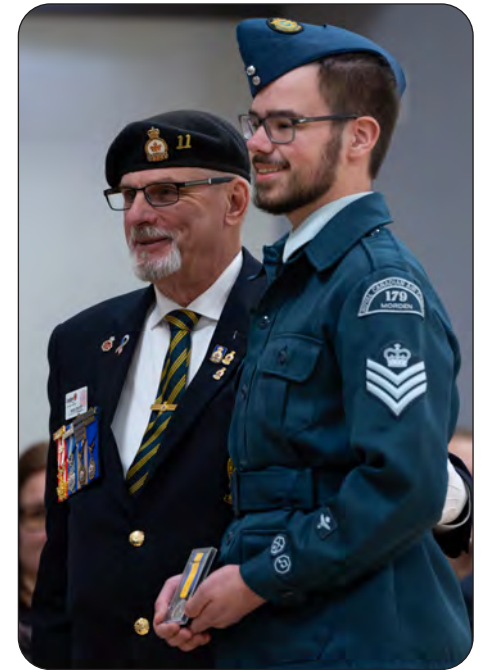
"It was pretty exciting, pretty special," he said, noting what attracted him to the program "was that I wanted to fly a plane."

He noted he also appreciates the camaraderie of the program.

"Now I like it all ... all the stuff that I have learned," he said. "I'm an introvert, so I'm always in the corner ... it's bringing me out."

Fellow cadet Lennon Klassen received a Commander's Coin at the ceremony in recognition of her keen involvement in the program.

"It's my first year in the cadet program. I started this last September," she shared. "Last year my school took a field trip to the aviation museum."



After that experience, I knew I wanted a career in aviation.

"Air cadets is one path toward that goal. I really like the community service aspect and being able to help others."

> MEASLES, FROM PG. 9

• Boundary Trails Health Centre emergency department at the junction of PTH 3 and PTH 14 on Dec. 2 from 6:25 p.m. to 10:10 p.m., Dec. 3 from 9:20 p.m. to 11:59 p.m., and Dec. 4 from 12 a.m. to 2:40 a.m. Monitor for symptoms until Dec. 24, Dec. 25, and Dec. 26, respectively.

Public health is also asking anyone who were at these locations during the specified times to check their immunization records and ensure they are up to date with measles vaccine (MMR or MMRV).

Further information on measles, exposures and immunization is available at www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/measles.html or call Health Links-Info Santé toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.



The local air cadet program has 61 members from all across the Pembina Valley.

The **Voice**
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arts&culture

Music and camaraderie

By Lorne Stelmach

The Prairie Red Coats Band is a tradition that has carried on now for a number of decades, and it continues to attract a solid core of devoted community musicians.

It fills a void for people who learned early on to play an instrument but perhaps have no other means to continue on with it.

"There's so many people locally who have played all these instruments," said Tom Neufeld, who is known as part of the duo LuLu and the Tom-Cat and is involved in the Prairie Red Coats Band, which has a couple upcoming performances.

"The school music programs are great ... but there's no vision put out there for the kids to continue on after," he said. "There's community bands right across Manitoba, right across Canada."

The formation of the Prairie Red Coats Band goes back to the 1970s when the then Tiger Hills School Division music program came to an end.

"So a community band started up to kind of fill the hole, and it's kind of evolved over time," Neufeld said.

As for the name, it is based on PTH 2 being named the Prairie Red Coats trail.

"There's been members from all across southern Manitoba, and it has met in various places," said Neufeld, noting they have previously met regularly in Holland, Somerset, and Miami but now gather in Roland. "Some have been there for many years. Some have just joined now and are really enjoying it."

"It involves members from all across southern Manitoba ... all the way from Altona in the east to Carman and Holland and to St. Alphonse and Winkler."

The number of band participants varies from one performance to the next.

"It all depends on the event and the season," Neufeld observed. "Typically it's somewhere between 15 and 20

to 22 people, and for special concerts, we actually have a number of friends of the Prairie Red Coats who join us."

Otherwise, band members meet weekly every Tuesday from September to June, and they have a variety of performances, including usually playing somewhere (last year it was Roseisle) on Canada Day.

"We all kind of dress accordingly on Canada Day," Neufeld noted. "We're all wearing red tops and black bottoms. Christmas concerts of course are a little more formal."

"There's so many in the community who have played and want to play and enjoy playing, so the Prairie Red Coats meets that need," he continued. "There's a wide variety of music—it's not just classical music ... there's a wide variety of levels of music put forward by our director."

The band recently played at the Buhler Active Living Centre in Winkler and it will be performing again Saturday, Dec. 13 at the New Leaf Garden Centre in Winkler followed by a Christmas concert Tuesday, Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. at the Roland United Church. Admission for the Christmas concert is free, though a freewill offering will be accepted.

"I AM ONE HAPPY PERSON"

The opportunity to share her love of music with like-minded fellows and the community at large is a blessing for band member Annette Verniest.

"As a member of the band, I am one very happy person that got the gift of music in my life that was once my dream and has been a reality still today," she said, sharing it was actually her children's involvement in their band program that got her into it.

"Since I had to run with them for evening band on Tuesday, I finally got to have a lifelong dream of being in the band. So off I go and take the six lessons and jumped right into the band," she recalled. "At first, it was really tough, but I was not letting go of my dream. I grew up always lov-



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

The Prairie Red Coats Band features musicians from across the region, and they're always looking for new members. Right: Annette Verniest says they're a welcoming group, and she certainly appreciates the opportunity to have music in her life.

ing the band my Dad was part of, the Bruxelles band. Years later, I am still here, but now I play percussion section, not the B flat cornet. I still love it."

Verniest said they are fortunate to have Bernard and Carole Helfter at the helm of the Red Coats. Bernard was the band teacher for the kids and adults who were able to take part in the Tuesday evening band at the Holland Elementary School.

"He is extremely knowledgeable of music and what all of the instruments can do when played well. He can hear if we miss one eighth rest while the entire band is playing. His knowledge is something we are all in awe of," Verniest said. "[Carole] can find the music in our band library, which has grown a lot over the years."

"We do have some band instruments folks can borrow when they join us. We play a wide variety of music, and for myself, that is how my horizons in what I like has grown a lot over the years, thanks to the exposure to the different songs and music."

It is also a very social group, she added.

"We used to have coffee time at half time, but because we got to be too



social, that got cut out, and we have a five-minute break so we can have more music time, which is what we are all there for."

Verniest noted the band has been able to perform in many concerts and events across the province over the years.

"One very special one in my mind was when we got to play as one of the community bands with the Tattoo band in Winnipeg. We also played in Kenora as opening band before the RCMP musical ride," she said. "Festival of Nations was a wonderful event for a number of years, as well as the musicians for some musicals."

She is thankful to have had these opportunities available to her.

"I am very grateful that I got the chance to realize that dream."

The **Voice**

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sports & recreation

Flyers down Monarchs 4-2

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Flyers had a mixed go of it in MJHL action this past week.

Last Thursday they doubled up on the visiting Winnipeg Monarchs 4-2.

The Flyers dominated in shots on net 45-19, with netminder Leif Ekblad giving up just one goal in the second period and a second late in the third.

Meanwhile, William Lyons got the Flyers on the board 1-0 as the clock wound down on the first period, Tanner George made it 2-1 midway through the second, and Niklas Gudmundson and Jacob Michelson had Winkler up 4-1 before the third period's midpoint.

The tables turned a few nights later when the Portage Terriers came to town.

Winkler's offensive lines couldn't find a chink in the armour of Portage goalie Mitchell Kathler, who denied all 23 shots sent his way.

Across the rink, Ekblad faced 18 shots, saving 16 before being pulled late in the third for the extra man. Portage scored twice in the second period



PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Winkler Flyers left-winger William Lyons tries to get his stick on a loose puck in front of the Winnipeg net last Thursday.

and then fired home an empty-netter in the game's final minutes to secure the 3-0 win.

With that, Winkler's record stands at 14-10-1-2 and 31 points, slotting them in fifth place in the MGEU East Division behind the Nighthawks (47

points), Terriers (43), Steinbach (41), and Selkirk (32) but well ahead of the Blues (20) and the Monarchs (eight points).

This week Winkler is on the road playing the Titans in Neepawa Wednesday and the Nighthawks in

Niverville Saturday before returning to Winkler Sunday for a rematch with the Monarchs.

Before the holiday break, the team plays in Selkirk Dec. 16, Steinbach Dec. 19, and then hosts the Winnipeg Blues Dec. 20.

Royals stay atop SEMHL standings; Bombers battle through tough two-game stretch

By Annaliese Meier

The Winkler Royals continue to set the pace in the SEMHL, improving to 7-0-0-1 after edging the Portage Islanders 4-3 on Saturday. Morden, meanwhile, split a pair of games this past week and sit fifth at 5-4.

Winkler remains firmly in first place with 15 points through eight contests, carrying an .875 winning percentage and a league-best 40 goals for.

Winkler opened the night quickly when Phil Letkeman scored just 49 seconds into the first, assisted by Justin Augert. Braden Hildebrand added a short-handed marker at 17:27 to send the Royals into the intermission up 2-0.

The Royals extended the lead early in the second on a goal by Marcus Neufeld, set up by Adam Henry and James Penner. Portage answered with three straight goals from Riley Hay, Carson Inman and Johl Swedlo to swing momentum, but Penner buried

the eventual game-winner at 19:35.

Neither team capitalized on the powerplay, with Winkler going 0-for-4 and Portage 0-for-6.

Goaltender Matthew Thiessen turned aside 37 shots for the win.

Winkler heads on the road Friday, Dec. 12 to face Warren.

Morden sits second in league scoring with 50 goals this season, but a pair of road losses saw the Bombers miss out on points despite pushing late in both outings.

On Wednesday, Morden fell 5-3 to the Springfield Winterhawks. After giving up the game's first goal, assistant captain Andrew Clark tied it early in the second. Michael Hlady put Morden ahead briefly before Springfield answered with four of the next five goals, including the winner from Matt Lamoureux at 8:29 of the third. Clark added his second late in regulation, but the Bombers finished 0-for-3 on the powerplay.

Reed Peters made 36 saves in the loss.

Sunday in Notre Dame, the Bombers found themselves down 4-0 early but clawed back with goals from Cade Kowalski and Jaden Townsend in the second. Collin Shirley made it 4-3

early in the third to spark a comeback push, but the Hawks responded with two more to seal a 6-3 final. Notre Dame scored once on their lone powerplay opportunity.

Morden looks to rebound Friday, Dec. 12 on the road against Red River.





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New name coming for Morris curling training centre

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The year-round curling training centre in Morris will have a new name next year.

As of July, the Cargill Curling Training Centre (CCTC) will be known as the ASHAM International Curling Development Centre, the Morris Curling Club announced at the 18th annual DEKALB SuperSpiel last month.

It's an exciting change, said club manager Steph Berard.

"It's a 10-year contract they've signed," he shared, noting this partnership with Asham Curling Supplies is a perfect match for the facility. "They're a company that makes curling equipment, so that part fits very well.

"It's probably one of the best things that's happened at the Morris Curling Club in years," he added. "They're going to be helping bring teams in, because they sponsor a lot of teams, so they're going to be using this facility as a place to bring all their sponsored teams. It will be good to see some big-name teams coming in more often."

"Curling is who we are, and it

means a great deal to Asham to support a facility that has been instrumental in shaping the future of our sport," said Asham manager Amanda Asham. "Partnering with this innovative training centre reflects our long-standing dedication to curlers worldwide, and we are proud to help build the next chapter of its legacy."

The CCTC got its start in 2016 thanks in large part to the support of Cargill, which contributed \$50,000 for the naming rights. Golden West Broadcasting also came on board with a \$25,000 donation to further spur on the fundraising campaign for the \$173,000 project.

From the start, the centre—Canada's first year-round curling training facility—has featured a geothermal ground loop system that provides summer ice for curling teams of all skill levels to hone their skills on. Later they added a high-tech robotic rock thrower to their arsenal.

From 2016 through 2025, countless elite, competitive, and developing teams have relied on the CCTC's summer ice to advance their technical development. The World Curling



SUPPLIED PHOTO

From left: Curling coaches Lorne and Chris Hamblin with Amanda and Arnold Asham from Asham Curling Supplies, which has purchased the naming rights to the curling training centre in Morris. As of July, it will be known as the ASHAM International Curling Development Centre.

Federation has also visited the centre twice to conduct research using the Canadian Rock Thrower and other

CCTC equipment.

The agreement with Asham begins July 1.

Female Hawks hold their own at 2 Nations tourney

By Lorne Stelmach

The female Pembina Valley Hawks had a break from league play this past weekend to take part in the 2 Nations Prep Series tournament in Brampton, Ontario.

The tournament featured teams from across the United States and Canada, and the Hawks had a decent showing overall.

They started off Friday morning against the Oshawa Lady Generals. Pembina Valley twice came back from one goal deficits to come out of the game with a 2-2 tie.

Casey O'Brien tied things up with a power play goal before the end of the second, and the Hawks were just pulling goalie Hannah Bannister late in the game for the extra attacker when Claire Boyd evened the score.

Pembina Valley next faced the Ayr Rockets, who are based out of North Dumfries, Ontario. The game remained scoreless until O'Brien stole a puck in the neutral zone, burst into the Rockets' zone, and fired a shot upstairs. It was all that was needed as the Hawks secured a 1-0 win. Madi-

son Froese earned a 20-save shutout in net.

The Hawks completed the round robin Saturday morning by thumping Carleton Place 7-3.

The game was closer than the final score would indicate, as the opponents hit a handful of posts and crossbars, but Bannister also made a number of huge saves. In the end, the Hawks got a hat trick by O'Brien along with goals by Bree Pearce, Sophia Cox, Leah Klassen and Payton

Manness.

The Hawks finished at the top of their pool with two wins and a tie, which meant their quarter-final matchup was against the Etobicoke Dolphins, who went 3-0 in finishing second in their pool.

It was a close game, but the Hawks came up just short in being edged 2-1 to close out their tournament.

"Our group played well," said coach Matt Victor. "Over the last four to six games, our grit and compete has been

strong and consistent."

The Hawks return to league play this week starting with facing the Winnipeg Ice Wednesday and then and the Interlake Lightning Saturday.

Pembina Valley is currently in seventh place at 5-7-0-1 for 11 points, which has them eight up on last place Interlake and three behind Winnipeg Avros and the Central Plains Capitals.

Male Hawks pick up third straight win

By Lorne Stelmach

A five goal outburst in the second period made the difference Friday for the male U18 Pembina Valley Hawks as they picked up their third straight win with a 6-4 victory against the Parkland Rangers.

It was a key victory for the Hawks, as the Rangers are among a pack of teams close in the standings. Pembina Valley sits in fifth at 15-7-0-1 for 31

points, but they are even with Southwest, only one point up on Eastman, and now five ahead of Parkland.

Cole Secord led the way for the Hawks with a hat trick, putting him at 16 goals now this season. He is tied for second in points with teammate Carson Hiebert, who is at 18 goals and 43 points while Secord is at 16 goals and 43 points.

Hiebert also scored for the Hawks along with Tyson Pethybridge and

Caden McMahon. Brody Peters made 36 saves in net with both teams firing 40 the other way.

It was the only game of the past week for Pembina Valley, who have a tough weekend ahead with two of the top three teams in the league. They visit the third-place Winnipeg Bruins Friday then host the second-place Winnipeg Thrashers Sunday.

News or sports tip? E-mail news@winklermordenvoice.ca or call 204-325-6888

RISE athletes compete at Cdn Fighting Championship

By Lorne Stelmach

RISE Athletics had a significant presence at the recent Canadian Fighting Championship (CFC) in fielding four athletes in events including muay thai, kickboxing, and mixed martial arts (MMA).

It is recognized to be one of Manitoba's most anticipated combat sports events of the year, and RISE athletes were represented in one-third of the entire card.

Competing for RISE Athletics were Ilya Gerassimov in amateur muay thai, Sam Freeheart in amateur kickboxing, Martin Neufeld in amateur kickboxing and Spencer Sullivan in amateur MMA.

Head striking coach Suleiman Bouhata praised the team's efforts and representation at the event.

"Having four athletes on a single CFC card is a testament to the work

this team puts in every day," Bouhata said.

"Sam and Martin earning wins was incredible, but I'm equally proud of Ilya and Spencer for their composure, discipline and willingness to challenge themselves on a big stage.

"RISE showed up in a big way tonight, and this is just the beginning for all of them."

The night saw standout performances from Freeheart and Neufeld, who both secured wins in their amateur kickboxing bouts.

In amateur muay thai, Gerassimov delivered a gritty, determined performance, displaying sharp technique and heart throughout the contest. Sullivan, coming off his recent MMA debut victory earlier this year, stepped into the cage once again and battled through a fast-paced amateur MMA bout, continuing to develop his all-around game.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

RISE Athletics sent four athletes to the Canadian Fighting Championship this fall, and they held their own amongst a competitive card.

Bouhata is pleased to see these athletes progressing and succeeding so well.

"I've been doing this for so long now ... preparing them and giving them all the skills that they need to compete and excel.

"We have a really good gym here at RISE," he added. "RISE, I would say, is the best place in the Pembina Valley to train and compete to a high level."

As far as people here being drawn to these fighting arts, Bouhata acknowledged being surprised by how it has

caught on.

"Honestly, I'm kind of surprised myself ... it's a smaller community, and I'm surprised myself that it's working this way so well," he said.

"I was pretty sure I was going to be doing it just for recreation only," he added. "I was surprised that they would be this into it and that they would do so well.

"Getting fighter ready in this kind of facility is so easy," Bouhata suggested. "We are lucky that we have RISE."

Twisters earn weekend split with statement win over Royal Knights

By Lana Meier

The Pembina Valley Twisters found their spark Friday night, defeating the River East Royal Knights 5-2 at the Morris MultiPlex before falling 5-1 to the Raiders Jr. Hockey Club on Sunday afternoon at Seven Oaks SportsPlex.

Friday's victory marked one of Pembina Valley's strongest outings of the MMJHL season, powered by a four-point night from Josh Guilford, who scored once and assisted on three others to earn first star honours. Goaltender Riley Brown was outstanding, stopping 38 of 40 shots to secure the win.

River East opened the scoring early, but the Twisters responded when Ethan Wilde notched his first of the season at 8:45, with Owen Vanrobaeys and Guilford drawing the assists. River East briefly regained the lead minutes later, but the momentum shifted for good in the second period.

The Twisters erupted for four unanswered goals — including a short-handed marker by Guilford at 5:07 — followed by tallies from Ketema Wall, Darby Olson on the power play, and Ryan Thiessen at 18:53. Vanrobaeys recorded three assists, while Guilford figured into four straight goals during the run.

Pembina Valley went 1-for-1 on the power play, while Brown shut the

door the rest of the way to close out the home win.

Late push falls short Sunday in loss to Raiders

On Sunday, the Twisters travelled to Winnipeg where they dropped a 5-1 decision to the Raiders. Goaltender Rowan Cherkas stopped 17 of 22, facing heavy pressure in the third period as the Raiders pulled away late.

The game remained tight for much of the afternoon. After two scoreless periods from Pembina Valley's side, the Twisters tied the contest 1-1 in the third when Vanrobaeys struck on the

power play at 10:43, assisted by Guilford and Wilde — both of whom built off strong Friday performances.

However, the Raiders responded with four goals in the final nine minutes, including two from Logan Ashe. Pembina Valley finished 1-for-12 on the power play, while goaltender Owen Savoie turned aside 35 of 36 for the Raiders.

Despite record, signs of momentum are building

With the split, the Twisters move to 3-19-0 on the season, but Friday's win — with secondary scoring, spe-

cial teams success, and standout goaltending — provided a glimpse of the potential within the young roster.

Wilde, Guilford, Wall, Olson and Thiessen all found the back of the net over the weekend, while Vanrobaeys posted four points across the two games. Brown's 38-save effort stands as one of the team's top goaltending performances so far this year.

Coming up, the Twisters host the Transcona Railer Express this Friday and then play at the St. Boniface Fiels on Sunday.

Mudbugs overpowered in 7-2 loss

By Haley Cvar

The Red River Mudbugs were unable to slow a quick-striking Mitchell Mustangs lineup on Saturday night, falling 7-2 at home in Hanover Tache Junior League play.

Mitchell took control early at Red River Arena, scoring three times in the opening 10 minutes and building a 4-1 lead by the first intermission. Affiliate player Jager Bueckert opened the scoring less than two minutes in, followed by goals from captain Mark Plett and Jeffrey Banman, whose marker at 9:01 stood as the game-winner. The Mudbugs re-

sponded on the power play at 10:29 when Griffin Hilderbrand converted a feed from Tyson Froese, but a late Mitchell goal from Lucas Jolicoeur restored the visitors' momentum.

The Mustangs stretched their lead in the second period with goals from Carson Funk and Banman, capitalizing on sustained zone pressure and heavy shot volume. Mitchell finished the night with seven goals on 46 shots and went 1-for-6 on the power play.

Red River found a spark early in the third when alternate captain Caleb Boulanger scored at 5:17, set up by Ziko Pankratz and Gavin Hildebrandt. The Mudbugs made the most

of their lone man-advantage opportunity, finishing 1-for-1 on the power play, but continued to face significant pressure defensively. Goaltender Darian Penner turned aside 39 shots in a busy outing.

Colton Wiebe added a late power-play goal for Mitchell to close out the scoring at 10:59.

Red River (6-7-0-0) now prepares for a challenging road matchup against the league-leading Macdonald Swarm on Friday, Dec. 12 in Sanford. The Mudbugs return to home ice on Sunday, Dec. 14 in St. Jean to host Landmark.

Elm Creek's Thiessen drives thriving harness racing career

By E. Antonio

Daryl Thiessen says he feels most alive when he gets his adrenaline pumping. As a professional harness racing driver, he fills his days with speed, action and community spirit.

Born and raised in Elm Creek, Man., Thiessen now races nearly every day of the year on some of Ontario's biggest circuits.

"I'm a huge sports and horse guy," he said. "Those are two things that make my world go round, so harness racing is the perfect fit."

In harness racing, drivers reach speeds of up to 40 miles per hour (64 km/h) in a two-wheeled cart called a sulky, pulled by standardbred horses. Unlike thoroughbreds, which gallop, standardbreds trot or pace and are known for their stamina and speed.

Thiessen was introduced to standardbreds at a young age and learned to ride by the time he was five or six. His first exposure to harness racing came through his grandfather, who swept tracks at local events.

"I would sit in the tractor with him, completely glued to the horses because I always wanted my own," he recalled.

Although his family couldn't afford a racehorse, he learned from doing farm chores with teams of horses and riding retired animals. He credits Ricky Rey and his wife, Janet, of St. Claude, for teaching him the finer points of riding and racing.

"They did everything for me growing up and are the real reason why I'm here today," he said. "Ricky is the hardest worker I have ever met and the reason why I have such a strong work ethic — he truly paved the way for my career."

Thiessen officially began training to drive in 2019 and earned his racing licence in 2022 at age 27. Since then, he has racked up more than 730 career wins, including 300 victories this year alone.

"This year has been such an absolutely successful season. I thought last year was great with 182 wins and \$1.2 million in purses, but 2025 has been the definite highlight with my 300 wins and over \$2 million in purses," he said.

Thiessen can race up to 10 horses per event and compete in as many as three events a day. Travel between tracks can take up to eight hours, but he thrives on the fast pace.

"I am not wired to go work a nine-to-five job each day. I tried that and I know it is not for me."

A few years ago, he stepped away from racing after breaking his femur



Pro harness racing driver Daryl Thiessen fields questions trackside after a race on the Ontario circuit.

and collarbone and dislocating his hip in a race. While helping a friend with drywall work during recovery, he realized how much he missed the sport. Five weeks later, he was back on the track.

"I'm not ready for an adult job yet because I love what I do — I want to avoid growing up," he said. "When I am down I always think, 'you could be doing drywall,' and that motivates me to keep trying and find the joy and passion of the little kid I still have left in me."

Despite his success, Thiessen says the job comes with sacrifices — the biggest being time away from family.

"It sucks not seeing your family who have given their all to support you. But when you race seven days a week in another province, you rely on their support from afar."

Another challenge is the physical and mental toll on both drivers and horses.

"It's safe to say horses are stronger than us and there's no way around it. Injuries are just expected with the intensity and action you have with the horse — it wears you out more than you think," he said.

"It's hard not to think about racing when you do it all the time. It's a lot of pressure, it's dangerous — there are lots of things on your mind. From the owners, trainers, spectators and yourself, it's a lot to deal with."

He added that the rhythm of racing leaves little time to reflect.

"There is no time to dwell on the slumps or celebrate the good times. It's a consistent cycle of race, sleep, wake up and reset every single day. You quickly learn that yesterday's home runs don't win today's games."

Thiessen stays motivated by reminding himself, "if I need to do it, I can do it."

His career goal is to race full-time



PHOTOS BY LORI-LYNN MARTIN

Elm Creek's Daryl Thiessen has turned a childhood love of horses into a thriving harness racing career, now competing year-round on major Ontario circuits.

on the Woodbine Circuit — Ontario's premier racing track — while improving his own well-being.

"I think all drivers would agree it's a tough sport and we all take better care of our horses than we do ourselves," he said. For him, self-care includes building a more balanced life with his girlfriend.

Eventually, he hopes to retire comfortably, support his parents and train young racehorses in a warmer U.S. state. With a six-figure income from

winnings, tips and bonuses this year alone, he shows no signs of slowing down.

"Right now, my horses are keeping me busy and sharp, and as long as my mind stays fresh, I'm going to keep living out my childhood dream."

Fans can watch Thiessen race on the HorsePlayer Interactive (HPI) satellite channel, through the Racetrack Television Network streaming service, or on YouTube.

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NOTICE OF HEARING

OF THE BOARD OF REFERENCE • PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

THE PRAIRIE ROSE SCHOOL DIVISION And THE WESTERN SCHOOL DIVISION

As required by Section 9 of The Public Schools Act (RSM 1987, c.P250), notice is hereby given that a public hearing of The Board of Reference, appointed as provided under Section 8 of The Public Schools Act, will be held as scheduled herein to hear any person or any person on their behalf in the matter of a request referred to The Board of Reference in accordance with Section 5 of The Public Schools Act.

The hearing will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams on **Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.** to hear the request of Lewis and Jennifer Wall to transfer 80.00 acres located in the Southwest Quarter Section 28, Township 4, Range 5 West from the Prairie Rose School Division to the Western School Division.

Further information with respect to the virtual hearing, including how to join the virtual hearing, may be obtained through the office of the undersigned between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Dated at Winnipeg, Manitoba, November 21, 2025.

Heather Thomson
Secretary
Board of Reference
c/o Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning
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Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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9	5	1	4	2	6	3	8	7
6	7	4	8	3	5	2	1	9
1	6	7	3	9	2	4	5	8
4	2	9	5	6	8	1	7	3
8	3	5	7	4	1	6	9	2
3	1	8	6	5	7	9	2	4
5	9	6	2	8	4	7	3	1
7	4	2	9	1	3	8	6	5

Sudoku Answer

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UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE PLANNING ACT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the date and at the time and location shown below, a PUBLIC HEARING will be held to receive representations from any person(s) who wish to make them in respect to the following matter:

THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF STANLEY BY-LAW 16-25
Being an AMENDMENT to the R.M. OF STANLEY
ZONING BY-LAW 8-18, AS AMENDED.

HEARING: R.M. of Stanley Council Chambers

LOCATION: 1-23111 PTH 14, SW 7-3-4W

DATE & TIME: December 18, 2025 at 10:05 am

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INTENT: To re-zone a portion of a parcel of land in the RM of Stanley
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To: "GD" General Development

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FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Melissa Groening, Planning and Development Officer
Rural Municipality of Stanley
1-23111 PTH 14, Stanley MB R6P 0B1
Phone: (204) 325-4101
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A copy of the above proposal and supporting material may be inspected at the location noted above during normal office hours, Monday to Friday. Copies may be made and extracts taken there from, upon request.



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OBITUARY

Irene Clara Giesbrecht

Irene Klassen passed away peacefully at Boundary Trails Health Centre on November 30, 2025.

Irene Clara Giesbrecht was born July 17, 1935 to David and Justina Giesbrecht. She grew up in Schoenwiese, MB. The family moved to Winnipeg in 1947 and attended school there.

On October 24, 1954 she married Herman "Herb" Klassen. They had four children – Gordon, Wayne, Darrell and Marlene.

Irene was always a hard worker and performed well for all her employers throughout the years.

Irene was very proud of her grandchildren, Christopher, Riley and Jodi and loved telling stories of when they were growing up.

Irene is survived by her sons, Wayne and Darrell (Jo Behr); grandchildren – Christopher, Riley (Carly), Jodi (Kristjan); great-grandchildren – Aria, Asher, Fynn, Rowan; sisters, Hilda and Vera;



daughter-in-law Nadine Klassen; son-in-law Mike (Carmen) Polson.

Irene was predeceased by her husband, Herb, and her children, Gordon and Marlene.

Irene will be missed by her friends at Garden Park Estates.

Public viewing will be on Friday, December 19, 2025 from 2 - 6 p.m. at Wiebe Funeral Home in Winkler. Funeral will take place on December 20, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. at Wiebe Funeral Chapel in Morden.

Wiebe Funeral Homes, Morden
in care of arrangements
wiebefuneralhomes.com



COMING EVENTS

A Christmas Musical Drama
Sunday, December 14 at 6:00 PM

The Story Must Be Told



When a celebrated artist returns home after his father's death, he's met with an unexpected request that upends his plans...and shakes his beliefs. As he reluctantly steps into a project he never wanted, the lights of Christmas begin to reveal truths he never imagined.

Presented by

Pembina Valley Baptist Church

120 Manitoba Road, Winkler, MB

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get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



RED RIVER CO-OP FOOD STORE

Santa Cookies

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

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

Bake 12-15 minutes, or until lightly golden.

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

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

Yield: 14 cookies

1 cup (2 sticks) Maple Hill Salted Butter, at room temperature

1/2 cup brown sugar

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

1 large egg, at room temperature

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon red food coloring

mini chocolate chips

mini red chocolate-coated candies

Frosting:

1/2 cup (1 stick) Maple Hill Salted Butter, at room temperature

4 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 1/2 cups powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350 F and line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

In large mixing bowl, beat butter, sugar and vanilla until light and fluffy. Add egg and beat until combined. Add flour and salt; mix until dough begins to form ball.

Remove 1 cup dough and set aside. Add red food coloring to remaining dough.



Gingerbread Dip

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

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

Serve with graham crackers and fruit.

Servings: 8-12

4 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature

1/4 cup brown sugar

1/4 cup powdered sugar

3 tablespoons molasses

1 container (16 ounces) Maple Hill Vanilla Greek Yogurt

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground nutmeg

2 cups whipped cream

graham crackers

fruit



Ask the Money Lady

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Good Luck and Best Wishes,
Money Lady

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

Cheesy Spinach Chicken Bake

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Servings: 4-6

2 cups chopped rotisserie chicken

10 ounces frozen spinach, thawed and drained

15 ounces ricotta cheese

2 cups mozzarella cheese

1 cup Parmesan cheese

1 tablespoon Italian seasoning

1 tablespoon garlic powder

1 tablespoon onion powder

1 tablespoon lemon thyme

Heat oven to 375 F.

Cut rotisserie chicken and spinach into bite-sized pieces. In baking dish, mix chicken and spinach with ricotta cheese.

Add mozzarella, Parmesan, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, onion powder and lemon thyme. Mix well then bake 30 minutes.

Setting some time aside to visit our elders is important, and not just at Christmas. We need to make an effort throughout the year. Regular calls and occasional visits and outings when possible are some of the best gifts you can give them.

 **DOELL**
LAW OFFICE
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