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The Winkler Morden Voice

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Christmas Cookie Walk

People got the chance to try a host of tasty holiday treats at the annual Cookie Walk in Morden last week. Funds from the event goes to support local non-profits. For the full story, see Pg. 14.
PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

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getinformed

Ryan Hildebrand wins Winkler city council seat

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Ryan Hildebrand won the Winkler city council byelection by a healthy margin last week.

Hildebrand received 503 votes Dec. 12, beating out fellow candidates Pam Fedack (275 votes) and Dustin Brown (274) to fill the seat left vacant after the passing of Don Fehr this fall.

The morning after his win, Hildebrand shared that the victory was still sinking in for him.

"It was interesting last night—you kind of work it all up in your head and then all of a sudden it's there and there's a lot of emotions."

Hildebrand's bid to sit on council for the first time earned him nearly 48 per cent of the votes cast.

"I've gotten so many letters and texts and emails of support, and it's quite humbling actually to realize that there's so many people that really put their trust in myself to move forward in this kind of a role," he said.

Hildebrand was sworn into council Tuesday and plans to hit the ground running.

He can't wait.

"Getting into it, learning how all the pieces of the city work, learning the planning processes, budgeting

processes, building relationships—all those pieces," he said. "I enjoy all of that, so that's really what I'm looking forward to is getting in there and learning the ropes and helping where I can."

His constituents are already reaching out, he shared.

"I was sitting around the coffee table here at the senior centre [Hildebrand is the executive director of the Buhler Active Living Centre], and I already have a laundry list of suggestions that I need to look into."

Hildebrand, a former accountant and chief financial officer at Eden Health Care Services, has served on the board of Winkler's social housing agency, Central Community Homes, for nearly a decade, and that cause remains a major focus for him as he joins council.

"The affordable housing part of it, really looking at that and working to help get the Manitoba Hydro hookups to come faster—when you have houses sitting empty, waiting only for Manitoba Hydro, that's really something that needs to work better."

"Otherwise, I'll be getting into the committee work, learning all that and bringing my experience, bringing what I can, into that work."



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Ryan Hildebrand is Winkler city council's newest member.

Evening of Elegance looking for donations

By Lorne Stelmach

An annual initiative is again aiming to help make graduation as special as possible for this year's graduates.

The Evening of Elegance invites people to donate their gently used or new formal wear and accessories to help create a special and memorable experience for successful graduates from Morden Collegiate and the Morden Adult Education Centre.

"It's very easy to spend over a thousand dollars on something you're going to wear for one day ... so it's not always feasible for some families," said Tyler Sloan, who is one of the teacher volunteers for the program.

"Cost of living is something a lot of families struggle with," he said. "So being able to provide our graduates and families with an opportunity to get some special dresses, suits, grad wear that they'll be able to use help celebrate that special day at no cost is

a great initiative."

If you have a dress, suit, or other formal accessories that you would like to donate to the event, you drop them off at Morden Collegiate in the main office.

The items will be displayed Feb. 11 at the Morden Youth For Christ Warehouse from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thanks to the donations from the community and local businesses, future graduates are able to browse and select an item at no cost.

Sloan anticipates the number of families taking advantage of this program as likely continuing to rise.

"As our grad classes get larger, I would imagine that number is also going to increase," he said. "On average, we're probably anywhere from 15 to 25 graduates and families that we are able to provide with gowns or suits or even some parents with some formal wear that they can use as well."

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Winkler Cheerboard distributes 418 hampers

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler and District Christmas Cheerboard made the holiday season a little brighter for 418 households last week.

The non-profit's volunteers were hard at work Dec. 17-18 wrapping toys and pulling together gift card packages to go out to families in need.

It's always a busy but rewarding week, shares Cheerboard president Crystal Rempel.

"Cheer Days are always fun. You spend so much time around the table [in advance], everyone has their tasks, but when the rubber meets the road, that's when it's fun," she says. "You're putting everything together that you've worked so hard for, for so long ... you get to share some love with others, and they really appreciate it."

Each recipient household received a grocery gift card to Gardenland Co-op and vouchers for bread at Valley Bakery, peanuts from Sunny Day, pizza from Spent Bros, and potatoes from The Potato Store.

For families with kids, every child 12 and up got a gift card to either Canadian Tire or Superstore, while kids under 12 received wrapped toys purchased from Canadian Tire or

Janzen's Hobbyland.

"They're very generous with us," Rempel notes, explaining they place their toy purchase orders with both places months in advance and the stores deliver the pallets of gifts to the Meridian Exhibition Centre during Cheer Days to be wrapped. "It's a great partnership, and we really appreciate it."

As always, there was quite a mix of households applying for Cheerboard hampers—some new to Canada, others longtime residents, large families, small families, young and old.

"There was a huge number of single-person households this year," Rempel shares. "And lots of larger families as well—we had presents for over 800 children."

The food and toys go a long way toward helping spread a bit of holiday cheer for families who are struggling to make end's meet.

Volunteers hear from recipients "how it changed their outlook for Christmas," Rempel says. "That it was so much more hopeful ... that there actually was something to open at Christmas, and the food and all the rest helps them."

None of this would be possible if not for the outpouring of community

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PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Cheerboard volunteers were hard at work wrapping over 800 gifts for children whose households were receiving hampers last week. Above: Karen Klassen and Becky Loewen with a few of the gifts ready to be delivered.

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Morden Area Fdn. hands out \$78,000 in grants

By Lorne Stelmach

The annual meeting of the Morden Area Foundation also saw the organization playing the role of Santa Claus. The foundation presented 10 grants that totalled about \$78,000 as part of the meeting and Christmas party last Wednesday.

This annual occasion is always a reward for the year-round efforts of the foundation's board of directors, observed chairperson Sue Nelson.

"It's wonderful. Everybody loves

the granting part of it because it's great to be able to give money out to these organizations. They're the people who are doing the real work in the community ... it's wonderful that we can help them in some way."

Nelson saw the past year as being a successful one for the organization in many respects, including having had their best Giving Challenge week yet with over \$49,000 raised.

"We were \$14,000 over the previous year, so that's tremendous," she said. "We had more donors this year than



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Among the many local organizations receiving funding from the Morden Area Foundation at their Christmas celebration last week was the Menzies Medical Centre (above) and the Pembina Valley Child Care Centres (left).

in previous years too, so we're very thankful for that as well."

There were also other notable highlights, such as the \$500,000 gift from Dave Lumgair in support of the new Learn and Return health care bursary program.

"We're very pleased with that because it was a local community initiative," Nelson said. "They came to us and said can we make this happen, and we are absolutely thrilled that we were able to."

Continued on page 5

Our mistake

Our story on the Mend the Gap donation to Central Community Homes last week (Dec. 12, Pg. 2) included an error.

At one point, the story attributed the Mend the Gap fund's creation to "the Friesens." That should have read "the Elias family," as the fund was founded by James and Jayci Elias.

The Mend the Gap Fund raises money to support improvements to local social housing developments, including the \$122,568.41 announced this month for the CCH affordable housing complex being built at the corner of Main St. and North Railway Ave.

We regret the error and any confusion it may have caused.

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Youth in Philanthropy program returns to Morden Collegiate

By Lorne Stelmach

The annual meeting and Christmas event of the Morden Area Foundation last Wednesday also celebrated the rebirth of the Youth in Philanthropy program at Morden Collegiate.

There had previously been a youth in philanthropy program that had been spearheaded by former teacher Phillip Duncan, noted principal Tania Sigurdson.

"It was thriving. We had lots of involvement, and then Phillip left the school, and then COVID came, so it really kind of took a back seat," she explained. "It's been important to us ... and we know in Morden how it's important to be giving back ... but we needed a teacher who is passionate about it and is going to lead the kids."

That teacher was Francis Omidora, who is now serving as the staff co-ordinator for the new Youth in Philanthropy group.

"I'm new to it, but I'm getting more understanding of it," said Omidora. "We look at different areas that youth in philanthropy can be supporting in the community."

He sees a big part of it as identifying what matters most to students and youth in the community.

"What programs can we support that will support youth in the community?" said Omidora.

"The youth are so enthusiastic about it," he said, noting for example they had started a food bank program that collects donations for the 500 Stephen community centre. "They are looking at all different opportunities, how they can connect even with Morden

Area Foundation."

There are 15 students currently involved, and Sigurdson noted it is interesting that only three of them were born locally.

"So there's a real hunger from our newcomer families and our newcomer kids to learn about our community, to give back and to learn about it," she suggested.

"It is so uniquely Morden how we take care of each other, and I think a lot of our students, the newcomers in our community especially, have been the beneficiaries of a lot of that, and they are interested now in being a part of this," Sigurdson added. "They are very grateful. Our students are aware and grateful of the warmth of Morden."



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

MAF board members with members of Morden Collegiate's Youth in Philanthropy group, which has been defunct for a few years but is now back up and running.

Ho-Ho-Hope It's Merry!

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> MAF GRANTS, FROM PG. 4

The foundation saw its net assets increase from \$4.2 million to \$6.5 million. Income in 2024 was \$254,625, including \$224,452 of investment income. That represents a slight increase from \$249,973 in 2023. Expenses came in at \$285,054, which was an increase from \$206,200 in 2023.

The foundation gave out more grants than ever this year, totalling close to \$78,000.

"It is the biggest ever that we have done," noted Nelson. "There were 10 grants total, and they represent quite a cross-section. We try to make it quite a range of projects."

The recipients included:

- Menzies Medical Centre - \$15,000 for an return of service initiative for new physicians.

Continued on page 8

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EDITORIAL > VIEWPOINTS > LETTERS

Are you who you think you are?

Know yourself. It is an ancient Greek saying whose earliest reference dates back to more than 2,500 years ago.

But what does that even mean? Know yourself ... or, as it has often been interpreted, know thyself?

Shakespeare said it as “to thine own self be true” as the words of the character Polonius to his son in Hamlet.

Of course, often the quote stops there, but the best of it, the real meat of the quote, follows as “and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.”

By which he meant that goodness toward others starts first with truly knowing ourselves.

Well, what better time to dig into this idea than the heart of winter as we huddle inside away from the darkness that seems to want to swallow the whole day.

It’s as good a time as any, better than most perhaps, because now we are in a season where often we seek to see the good in others and in the world. The time of year where we strive to see light in everyone and all things so that we might find reason to be thankful.

While this is a good thing it often fails to do the most important thing—to turn our eyes inward and seek out that which is good within ourselves. Know yourself.

Honestly, I would much rather spend time looking at others, seeking goodness in others, judging others, and avoid having to turn the lens inward for fear of seeing things I do not like.

But how can we effectively spread cheer, mercy, and goodness into the lives of others when we avoid doing it to ourselves? How can we be good agents in the world when we leave our own lives unexamined?

As it has been said by as good a Greek as any (Socrates supposedly): “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Perhaps a tad extreme, however Socrates was supposedly at his execution when he said it so we can forgive him a somewhat cynical view of things.

The point is we place ourselves on much firmer ground when we stand in knowledge of who we are.

Am I the good I look for in others? Am I what I want to see in the world or am I simply encouraging others to be this so that I do not have to?

The task of periodically looking into ourselves, our motives, and actions can be exhausting. This is why we tend to avoid doing it in the first place. Mostly though we avoid it because we are not sure we will like what we see.

The trick however to being a person you would admire, a person of integrity, is to be able to see yourself for who you really are so that you can then forgive yourself.

We all act and think in ways that may shame us. To move beyond it is to acknowledge it, forgive, and strive to do better.

When we do this, it tears away the interior walls of shame. Then we can look outward and seek the good in others and, because we are able to find it in ourselves, celebrate it. We can even stand more firm alongside those who have failed in ways we have and offer our strength to them in empathy.

As we sit on the cusp of a new year may we find the strength and resolve to look inward, wipe away the things we dislike, and start the new year fresh for our own sake and therefore the sake of those around us.

By Peter Cantelon

“AM I THE GOOD I LOOK FOR IN OTHERS? AM I WHAT I WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD?”

Letter policy

The *Voice* welcomes letters from readers on local and regional issues and concerns.

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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• DON'T MIND THE MESS

The big yellow bowl

My big yellow bowl was a wedding gift, about a million years ago. Other than a small album of poorly developed photos and a dress I'll never, ever, fit into again, it's probably the only physical thing I still have left from that special day.

Props to the Tupperware company,



By Lori Penner

because decades later, other than a slightly discoloured lid and a small melt mark from a brief encounter with a hot pan, that plastic bowl is still a functional part of my kitchen arsenal.

"Did Lori bring her big yellow bowl?" is a common question at family gatherings, not because of its vibrant colour, but because of its much-anticipated contents.

When that bowl shows up, they all know they're getting my famous tasty taco salad. I guess you could add "magical" to that list of adjectives, because it usually disappears within minutes.

This could be a huge ego booster, if there was anything even vaguely unique about my recipe. But the thing is, it's exactly like any other taco salad recipe in any church recipe book you'll find.

I've freely shared it dozens of times, without omitting or adding a single ingredient, and many recipients will respond later, saying, "I don't know what I did wrong, but my salad just doesn't taste like yours."

They followed the recipe, word for word. It was just as expensive to make—cheese and ground beef are high ticket items these days. They used the same tortilla chips, the same homemade dressing.

I've come to the conclusion that the big yellow bowl is what made it perfect. Why? Because it's part of the memories attached to that salad.

Most of us can remember a certain container or casserole dish our mothers brought to gatherings or church potlucks. We gravitated to them, because we knew the contents were familiar and wouldn't deliver any weird ingredients or unpleasant surprises.

Among all the other Corningware dishes on the table, we knew the one with the little strawberry print on the side belonged to our mom, and it usu-

ally contained scalloped potatoes or hashbrown casserole. Nothing all that adventurous to the palate, but it was predictable and satisfying, and we wouldn't get the stink eye when the maker saw how much we left over.

This Christmas, my big yellow bowl will make its regular rounds. I'm already stocking up on taco seasoning and tortilla chips, and scouting for sales on the hamburger and cheese.

Because we're creatures of habit, familiar things become beloved things. It's why we hang onto items that lost their appeal to anyone else decades ago. There are memories attached to them, and their dated colour and style only add to their charm.

We remember more than the contents. On a subconscious level, we remember the moments attached to them. The loved ones who were still with us the last time we enjoyed that dish. That special someone we brought to meet the family for the first time. The new baby we were

Continued on page 8

• GUEST COMMENTARY

"Fight for the things you care about"

By Alan Campbell

Now more than ever before, your voice matters.

On deliberations related to road, drinking water and sewer infrastructure investment, resource allocation for public schools and the programs they offer, and the litany of other matters which are within the governance and decision—making authorities of our local municipal councils and school boards – your voice matters.

For all school boards and municipal councils in Manitoba, October 2024 marked the "halfway point" of their current terms and therefore, the time has come to start thinking about the next election in October of 2026. It might seem early for the electorate at large, but for incumbents and prospective candidates alike, the wheels should already be turning on the topic of seeking or making nominations. Many locally elected politicians who serve as mayor, reeve, councillor or trustee will tell you that their decision to run the first time was one that took months or even years to make – which brings me to the crux of my message.

The first quarter of this 21st century has been tumultuous and challenging, with many democratic institutions stretched to their limits, not only on the global stage, but internationally in the North American context and certainly in the national, provincial

and local arenas across Canada as well. General discontent and distrust among citizens have in most cases, including right here in Manitoba, lead to poor voter turnout for all levels of government. As a point of reference, according to Elections Manitoba, the average voter turnout for Manitoba's provincial elections since 2000 has been about 55 per cent, while the most recent municipal election for the City of Winnipeg yielded a turnout of only 37.5 per cent – the lowest turnout in the last 25 years. While statistics for individual municipalities and school boards in Manitoba are difficult to come by, it is a reasonable assertion that voter turnout for councils and school boards have followed the same alarming trends.

So while discontent and distrust are contributing factors for our collective sluggish attendance at the polls, a lack of candidates and therefore a lack of choice undoubtedly makes the problem worse. Frustratingly, we can all think of examples of elections where the slate of candidates prompts us to stay away from the voting booth or in the case of acclamations, has us saying, "You'd think with all of this issues, more people would put their name forward to make things better." That's why I'm writing this. Because you likely either know someone or you yourself are someone who can

get in there and make a positive impact.

Public education is funded either directly or indirectly by all those who pay taxes, because public education forms the very foundation of our society's future; future workforce, future parents and future leaders. Public education is therefore, of interest to everyone. With this in mind and contrary to popular misconception, you don't need to be a current parent to be a school board trustee. Indeed, the argument could be made that diversity of perspective, including from those without children in the public school system, for example, makes for highly representative school boards.

The same logic applies for candidacy for election to your local municipal council. You don't have to be a land developer, business owner or direct user of public transit, for example, to make a valuable and informed contribution to your local municipal council. While perspectives informed by those backgrounds are of course, important, the same diversity of experience and expertise around the council table is as vital as it is at the school board table.

As a closing thought, I offer an acknowledgement of the obvious and a call to push back at it; few people think they have either the time or the patience for the thankless job of lo-

cally elected public life. If we think low voter turnout is a problem, by comparison, low candidate turnout is crisis. What all communities across Manitoba, be they urban or rural, require now more than ever before, are strong and progressive voices to inform the local governance decisions that have the biggest impacts on their citizens.

Let's be honest, if you've continued reading to this point, your level of interest in the topic almost guarantees that at a minimum, you know someone who should consider running in 2026. Or, you should consider seeking a nomination. Please start to have these conversations within your own network of friends and colleagues. If you'd like more information on what elected office entails, don't hesitate to reach out to your local school board, municipal council, the Manitoba School Boards Association or the Association of Manitoba Municipalities.

"Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you." —The late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Alan Campbell is the president of the Canadian School Boards Association, past president of Manitoba School Boards Association, and a trustee for Interlake School Division

Rhineland Empty Stocking Fund receives record donation

By Lori Penner

Volunteers and committee members of the Rhineland Empty Stocking Fund (RESF) had a busy morning on Dec. 14, delivering 238 hampers to local families in need.

After experiencing a 26 per cent increase in hamper requests last year, the RESF saw a further eight per cent increase this year. About 792 people, including 401 children, were impacted by the hampers delivered in Altona, Gretna, Plum Coulee, and the Municipality of Rhineland.

Prior to loading the trucks, the organization was presented with a surprise gift of their own. Elmer's Manufacturing made a \$20,000 donation to

the fund, the largest single donation to the campaign in its history.

Elmer's president and CEO Mike Friesen said they were approached by Ray Loewen, who shared that the RESF needed support.

"We're always thrilled to have the opportunity to support local initiatives, and this one has been a growing need in the community," Friesen said. "After hearing there were some shortfalls, we felt compelled to step in and focus on this very important mission here.

"It's important to give everyone the opportunity to experience that joy on Christmas, and all the warmth and love the season brings. And to be able to give and contribute to that feels good, too."

RESF committee chair Ang Dueck said the needs continue to grow across the region.

"It was definitely higher than last year by about 20 families," she shared. "We had a great number of volunteers show up for the delivery. Everybody did a really good job."

Dueck adds that this is really a year-long effort.

"We start fundraising and planning in February already for the upcoming



Volunteers delivered care packages to 792 people on Saturday.



PHOTOS BY LORI PENNER/VOICE

Elmer's Manufacturing's Mike Friesen (far left) and Rhineland Empty Stocking Fund committee chair Ang Dueck (holding cheque, right side) with the company's \$20,000 donation and RESF committee members (from left) Brenda Thiesen, Linda Loewen, Nicole Peters, Ken and Ruth Bergman, Ben and Liz Hildebrand, and Carilla Hildebrand.

ing Christmas. The contribution from Elmer's was a wonderful surprise. It really boosted our budget and we're very grateful. We're grateful for any contributions that we get. Thank you also to the community for donating. We could not do this without you."

> WINKLER CHEER, FROM PG. 5

support the Cheerboard campaign receives every year. In addition to the volunteers—board members, gift wrappers, and delivery drivers—the Winkler area always steps up financially for the campaign.

At press time, the Cheerboard was still short of its \$130,000 fundraising goal, but Rempel was confident they'd get there.

"They're still coming in," she says of the donations, noting, for example, the proceeds from Tim Hortons' hugely successful Holiday Smile campaign were being presented to them just this week. Area schools also collected upwards of \$6,800 through their Fill the Stocking festivities. "A number of schools just ran with it, and the kids were learning about generosity and community building ... that was awesome to see.

"Businesses have been awesome in how they've supported us through all of our campaign," Rempel adds. "The Holly Jolly Breakfast, our events, the firefighters and the businesses that help support the Flyers versus Fire game ... it takes a community, and we really do feel the love and support from the community."

> PENNER, FROM PG. 7

carrying. The feeling of togetherness we felt while we heaped our plate, surrounded by the people who raised us, understood us, and loved us anyway.

So yes. It's just a big yellow bowl. But I know it's something I'll probably have to list in my will, explaining that they'll just have to take turns with it after I'm gone.

I'll tuck the recipe inside it, just in case.

Fdn. grants aim to meet community's needs

From Pg. 5

- Pembina Valley Child Care Centres - \$15,000 for equipment and supplies.
- Many Hands Resource Centre - \$10,000 for the fresh food access vouchers.
- 500 Stephen Community Centre - \$10,000 for a community access transportation pilot project.
- Morden Activity Centre - \$7,427.48 for a new high end commercial coffee

feemaker.

- Morden Family Resource Centre - \$5,200 for preschool programs.
- Morden Minor Soccer Association - \$5,000 for soccer balls and bags.
- South Central Regional Library - \$4,125 for a new book return setup.
- Youth for Christ - \$3,000 for the purchase of equipment for its workforce program.
- Pembina Valley Truth and Action Working Group - \$3,000 to subsidize three educational events.

Nelson said there were some really

exciting projects, and they also particularly liked supporting some newer organizations and smaller ones. Ultimately, they seek to respond to the community's needs with these grants.

"That's what we should be doing. We should be listening to the community, finding out what the needs are, what people think is important and then responding to it," Nelson said. "That's the best way to be good stewards of the money donors have entrusted us with."

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A taste of Brazil in the heart of Canada

By Ashleigh Viveiros

A cozy Winkler café that offers a taste of Brazil in the heart of Canada marked its one-year anniversary this fall.

Minas Café & Eatery has been open for business since late 2023, and they continue to make a name for themselves, both from their location at 1027 Mountain Avenue and through the sale of their tasty Brazilian finger foods in grocery stores across southern Manitoba.

Owners Samuel and Bruna Campos say they've been encouraged by the response, and have loved introducing people to the Brazilian coffee and sweet and savory dishes that are their speciality.

"It's gone well. We notice that everyone that tries our Brazilian flavours, our Brazilian foods, they love it," says Samuel. "The challenge always is being in the [minds] of people when they think about food."

"It's interesting to see how people

are open to try new food here," says Bruna, pointing to menu favourites like their pastel (a thin-crust fried pie stuffed with fillings like beef or cheese) and bolinho (a crispy dumpling appetizer) dishes.

Bruna and Samuel have been in Canada for nearly seven years now, moving first to Morden and then Winkler.

"We came to Canada looking for a better place for our kids," Samuel shares.

An entrepreneur at heart, Samuel has been involved in a few different businesses here in recent years. He also runs a Portuguese podcast, interviewing immigrant entrepreneurs about the challenges of running a business in a new country. Bruna, meanwhile, worked in fitness back home in Brazil.

The restaurant world has been something new for the couple, with Bruna taking the lead.

"When we moved here, I was at home [with the kids]," Bruna says. "So I started making food, bar food,



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE
Bruna Campos in front of some of the Brazilian grocery items they sell in addition to their homemade foods.



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE
Samuel and Bruna Campos with some of the tasty treats on offer at Minas Café & Eatery in Winkler.

from Brazil, for the family and for friends. And it did well. So I started making them and selling them, just from home."

Her first product was pão de queijo, a Brazilian cheese bread that proved to be a big hit.

"I made them frozen and I started selling them out," Bruna recalls of setting up tables at farmers' markets and vendor fairs near and far. "That's how I started in the food industry."

They found a great deal of success in Winnipeg, especially.

"There's a big Brazilian community there, a huge community," Bruna shares.

As they grew, they began to look for a place outside their home where Bruna could cook.

"That's how we found this place," she says.

The building, tucked in amongst a residential area down the street from Winkler Elementary School, has been a lot of things over the years—a café, a pottery studio, and, going way back, a neighbourhood grocery store. With its commercial kitchen, it seemed the perfect fit for the growing business.

"In the beginning, I wanted only the kitchen, and then Samuel came up with the idea of opening a space for the public and selling our own stuff, ready to go. And here we are," says

Bruna.

"The people around here, the neighbours, were asking constantly, 'When are you going to be open for customers?'" Samuel says, chuckling. "This made us want to open as a restaurant or a coffee shop."

They offer a little bit of everything. "We could be considered a snack shop, basically," Bruna says of the finger foods on their menu. "But now we have meals as well. We have soup, other foods, all Brazilian style and taste."

They also have a few shelves filled with imported coffee and other groceries from Brazil—a real taste of home for the growing Brazilian community in the region—and a small play area to keep the kids busy while their parents enjoy a snack or a coffee.

"We're trying to be a place where they feel like they're in Brazil," Samuel says, noting the café's name—Minas—is a nod to the state in Brazil they come from, as is the mountain in their logo. "We're friendly people, we love to talk, treat people well. When they come in, I want them to see a different atmosphere, a really friendly place."

You can also find their products under the "B Snack" brand in grocery stores, including at Gardenland Co-op in Morden and Winkler.

BTHC launches new volunteer greeter and navigator program

By Lorne Stelmach

A volunteer effort is providing a friendly face to welcome people to Boundary Trails Health Centre and direct them where they need to go in the hospital.

The new greeter and navigator volunteer program has been running for a few weeks, and it has already received great feedback from visitors and patients alike.

"We've had a really warm reception. People have said we really appreciate the volunteers at the door. They've been so helpful, and it's just nice to come in and have a friendly face that's greeting you," said Nicole Unger, who helped spearhead the initiative and is involved as one of the volunteers.

"It was a need ... that we should have someone at the front to help greet and direct people, more so with the navigating, helping people go in the right direction," said Jerri-Ann Froese, volunteer co-ordinator at the hospital.

Froese said she and Unger were approached with the idea this past fall by the BTHC Foundation.

"A lot of people were coming to the foundation door and asking for directions, and so the foundation approached us and said hey, we're needing some help here."

They were familiar with similar services that are

offered at hospitals in Winnipeg, and they recognized that something was needed here.

"And as we're expanding and growing, it's more important than ever to have that, so that kind of planted the seed, and then Nicole and I talked about it and we said let's do it," said Froese.

"People will need to navigate the new part of our hospital, so we can definitely see the value in having volunteers helping patients navigate where to go," added Unger.

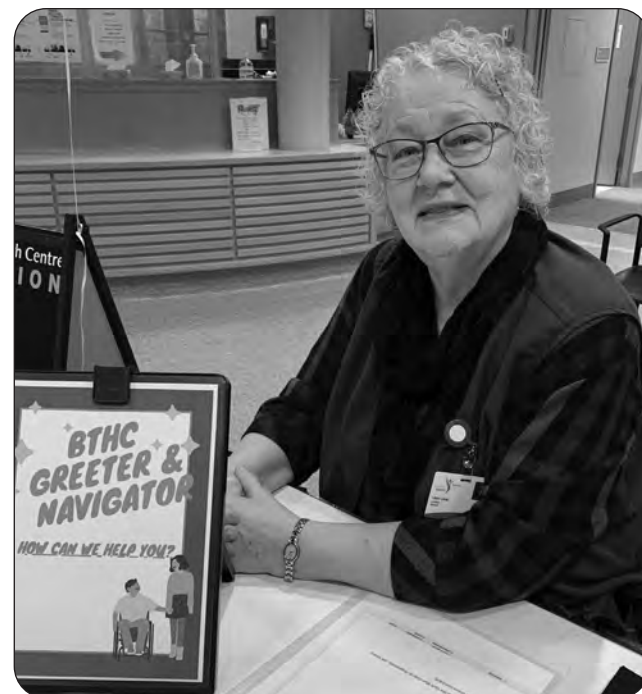
Froese noted they reached out on social media and through local churches to find the greeter navigators. They so far have 14 volunteers in place who fill shifts Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to noon and then noon to four p.m.

"We're trying to split it up so it doesn't take a full day of someone's time," said Unger. "Our volunteers commit what they can ... some come every week, some come once a month. It depends on your schedule."

She said they all find it a meaningful role to help fill at the hospital.

"It's trying to help people on some of what could be their worst days," she said. "They find it very rewarding to be able to give back in this way."

"We find so far our volunteers have been awesome, trying to fill in gaps to make sure there's always a volunteer available to help people because



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Greeter Lillian Unrau on duty at the Boundary Trails Health Centre. The new program is looking for more volunteers to help greet and guide visitors to the hospital.

they see the value in this," added Froese.

She noted they would love to have some more friendly faces join the greeter team so that they could possibly offer this helpful service on a more regular basis. Interested volunteers can contact Froese at 204-331-8815.

"We'll be glad to take more volunteers. If people are willing and able to help out, we would take them all."



ALTONA POLICE SERVICE PHOTOS

Altona Police Service Chief Dan Defer (left in both photos) with the department's new constable, Brent Krahn (left photo) and Xerxes Tabunar, at their graduation from the Saskatchewan Police College last week.

Altona PD welcomes two new officers

By Voice staff

The Altona Police Service has welcomed two new members to its ranks.

Cst. Brent Krahn and Cst. Xerxes Tabunar have graduated from the Saskatchewan Police College and begun their field training in Altona.

It brings the department back up to a full complement after eight months of running short-staffed in the wake of two officers leaving to pursue a career with the RCMP, shared Chief Dan Defer.

"It was a long summer with many staffing challenges, but fortunately there were no major incidents," he said. "Officers worked together to ensure the vacancies were covered, as

well as annual holidays. Many extra hours were logged to ensure the citizens of Altona were not affected by the vacancies."

Defer also sends thanks to the Morden and Winkler police departments for their support the past several months.

"Although the need never arose, both Morden and Winkler Police Services were ready to assist with extra officers in the event they were required, and this reassurance was greatly appreciated," he said. "Our three services work closely every day, and this is just another example of the great working relationships the three agencies maintain."

The **Voice**

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Doctors MB group tours local medical facilities

By Ashleigh Viveiros

A team from Doctors Manitoba made the rounds at the health care centres in Morden-Winkler last week.

The union, which represents more than 4,000 physicians and medical learners across the province, came to hear concerns from medical staff about the stability of health services in the community.

These visits are all about connecting with doctors and seeing “what their issues are and what their priorities are and how Doctors Manitoba can help,” said Dr. Randy Guzman, president of the organization. Guzman works as a vascular surgeon at St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg.

The group toured the C.W. Wiebe Medical Centre in Winkler, the Menzies Medical Centre in Morden, and the Boundary Trails Health Care Centre.

Discussions with health care providers made it clear that staffing remains a major hurdle at all three facilities.

“The resources are an issue. There’s just not enough doctors,” Guzman said. “Doctors are being overstretched in their different roles. Whether it be

ER or hospice or primary care or cancer care or whatever role they have, they’re being stretched.”

Doctors are putting in long hours not just on their clinical practices but also at the hospital, and staffing critical services like the emergency room is an ongoing concern.

“It’s hard to have enough doctors to do all these roles and staff the ERs,” Guzman said. “We could use 20 or 30 more doctors today [in Morden-Winkler], from what I’m hearing just in the preliminary discussions today.”

“THE RESOURCES ARE AN ISSUE. THERE’S JUST NOT ENOUGH DOCTORS.”

It’s a problem that’s certainly not unique to Morden-Winkler—communities across the province have been facing dire staffing shortages for years now, Guzman said.

“It’s a common theme. It’s really about having more doctors so that patients can have more access, and so we’re advocating for more doctors,” he shared. “Manitoba has I think the second lowest per capita in the country, physicians, lowest family medicine, third lowest specialists, so we have some work to do.”

“We’ve got great people here, but we need to help ... we need more physicians and more resources for patient



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Doctors Manitoba president Dr. Randy Guzman with Dr. Ganesan Abbu during a tour of the Boundary Trails Health Centre last week. Guzman also visited the clinics in both Winkler and Morden to speak with local doctors about the challenges they’re facing.

care.”

Both recruitment and retention will play a role in addressing this issue.

“[Medical] students and residents, we need to increase the amount of spaces, and the university has done that ... but that’s not an instant kind of fix,” Guzman pointed out. “And then retention—helping doctors stay and supporting them in communities like this and offering connections to the community.”

On the positive side of things, Guzman shared that he came away from the tours impressed not just by the fa-

cilities but also the dedication of Morden-Winkler medical professionals.

“I’m particularly impressed by the physicians and their commitment not only to patients, but their commitment to the community,” he said. “In [Winnipeg], doctors are connected to the city as well, but the connection in a rural area is even more important and more striking, and it’s really something to see.”

“I applaud the physicians at the Menzies and CW Wiebe for their dedication to their patients and the community.”

Elks Lodge supports Morden Handivan

By Lorne Stelmach

The Morden Elks Lodge continue their efforts to raise money to put back into the community, and the service organization recently supported the Morden Handivan.

The Elks Lodge along with the Manitoba Elks Foundation contributed \$5,000 to the Morden Handivan to go towards the purchase of a new vehicle.

The presentation was made Dec. 6 at the Morden Legion in conjunction with the club holding its Cash is King fundraising raffle draw.

The lucky winners of the draw were

Edward Dyck with the top prize of \$10,000, John Penner with the second prize of \$3,000 and Vaughn Mayert with the third prize of \$2,000.

Proceeds from the raffle will go back into the community, and Penner noted the organization supports a number of projects and initiatives annually.

“The Morden Elks Lodge presents approximately \$30,000 every year to various local charities in our area,” said Elks exalted ruler Henry Penner. “The lodge’s 80 members volunteer their time to make life sweeter, people happier and the world a better place.”



SUBMITTED PHOTO

On hand for the cheque presentation from the Morden Elks to the Morden Handivan was Gerry Deroche, Brian Nedohin, Elks exalted ruler Henry Penner, and Lori Willcocks.

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Keep being you **Love your ears**

Local student wins Fire Prevention Week contest



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A Morden student for a third straight year is the lucky winner of a provincial fire safety contest. Remi Guevin, a Gr. 4 student at École Discovery Trails, received her prize of a \$200 gift card to Toys 'R Us along with fire prevention materials for her classroom Monday from firefighter Jonathan Baumgart and Chief Andy Thiessen of Morden Fire and Rescue. Every year, the Manitoba Firefighters' Burn Fund, Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs, Province of Manitoba, and the Office of the Fire Commissioner hosts a home fire escape plan contest for all Kindergarten to Grade 4 students from across the province as part of Fire Prevention Week.



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Holiday cookie cheer

By Lorne Stelmach

A variety of sweets and treats were available at the Pembina Parish last Friday as part of an annual fundraiser.

The proceeds from the United Church's Cookie Walk sale all go back into the community to support local non-profits.

"It's a fundraiser for our outreach, so everything is donated, and the money goes to projects outside of us in the community ... none of it stays in-house," explained Edith Lovatt, a volunteer with the church's outreach interest group. "We have people donate all kinds of cookies and baking,

and you go around with your box and pick and choose however many different kinds of things you want to have."

It's proven a popular event for years now, Lovatt noted.

"It gets a huge response, and I don't even really recognize many of the people here, so it's obviously a greater community response," she said. "You can't help but feel warm and good and the Christmas spirit when you're doing this."

Fellow volunteer Sue Nelson echoed Lovatt's thoughts about the event.

"It's so much fun because people love to come and love to share their



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

The community came out to stock up on holiday cookies at the Pembina Parish Cookie Walk last Friday.

baking and then try everybody else's baking," she said. "And all of the money we raise goes to local charities. It all goes back into the community.

"It's a great time. People come, and they stay for coffee and have some cookies too. We love doing it. It's so much fun."

Western SD superintendent to retire in 2025

By Lorne Stelmach

The year ahead will bring new leadership to Western School Division.

The division announced last week that Stephen Ross will be stepping

down from the superintendent role sometime in 2025.

Ross is believed to currently be one of the longest serving superintendents in the province, and he had served in the division in other capacities before

assuming the role of superintendent.

"For over 18 years, Stephen has been a cornerstone of our division, bringing unwavering dedication, passion for education and a student-first approach to every decision he has made," the division shared in a statement. "His leadership exemplifies Western School Division's motto 'rooted in caring and committed to learning.'

"His commitment to the future of our community and his tireless work on behalf of students, staff and families have left an indelible mark on our community," the division said. "We have been incredibly fortunate to have Stephen's leadership during times of growth and change. His ef-

forts have helped to shape a strong foundation for the division, and his vision has positioned us to continue building a bright future for our students and community."

The timing of his departure will depend on how the recruitment process goes over the next few months.

"As the board now begins the process of finding a new superintendent, we remain committed to ensuring that students, education and community remain at the heart of everything we do," the division said. "The board would like to thank Stephen for everything he has done for Western School Division. We wish him all the best in his next chapter."

Ross was not available for comment.



Thank you to all of the volunteers who came out to build with us in 2024.

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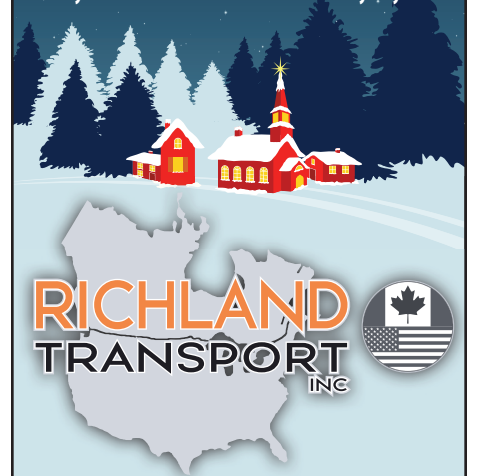
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Holiday cookies support Morden, Winkler Christmas Cheerboards



LEFT PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE; RIGHT PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Tim Hortons restaurants in Morden and Winkler gave back to the local Christmas Cheerboard campaigns in a big way this month. Proceeds from the sale of holiday smile cookies raised \$11,064 in Morden and \$6,340 in Winkler and will be split between each community's Cheerboard campaign and Tim Hortons Foundations Camps. Owner Jeff Doerksen said they're pleased with how this holiday campaign, now in its second year, has grown. "We'd like to see it get to the same level as our spring campaign, but it's a work in progress," he said, noting they're happy to be able to support the spread of holiday cheer in the two communities. Winkler Cheerboard president Crystal Rempel said donations like this are a blessing that go a long way toward helping them reach their fundraising goals each year. The Winkler campaign delivered hampers to 418 households last week. Morden's deliveries are taking place this week.

Grade One Book Giveaway helps spread the joy of reading

By Lori Penner

In a much-anticipated annual tradition, Friesens is once again partnering with the Canadian Children's Book Centre (CCBC) for the TD Grade One Book Giveaway.

For 24 years, Friesens has brought joy to young readers across Canada, printing and distributing approximately 500,000 to 600,000 books each year—over 12 million books since the program began in 2000.

This year's lucky recipients will be delighted by *Violet Shrink* by Christine Baldacchino, illustrated by Carmen

Mok and published by Groundwood Books. For French-speaking children and those in French immersion programs, the book is also available as *Violette Cent-Soucis*, translated by Mireille Messier.

Violet Shrink tells the story of a young girl who grapples with social anxiety at parties and family gatherings, finding solace in her imagination and support from her father.

"Violet Shrink doesn't like parties. Or bashes, or gatherings," the book reads. "Lots of people and lots of noise make Violet's tummy ache and

her hands sweat."

Through this heartfelt narrative, children can learn about understanding and acceptance.

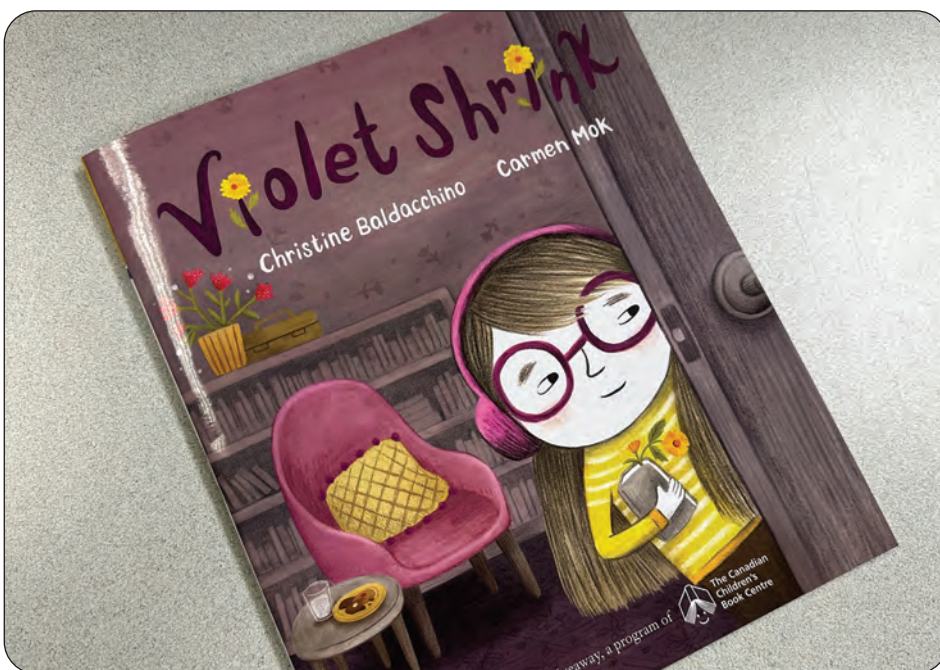
CCBC executive director Stephanie Wells highlighted the program's inclusivity: "One of the tangible benefits of the program is that all children are included, with some receiving their very own book for the first time. This year, we are also including tips on reading aloud and sharing stories for parents and caregivers."

"Friesens is thrilled to back this initiative," says marketing manager Pamela Hiebert. "The greatest gift we can give our children is the ability to read and form a love for the written word, helping them to increase their knowledge and understand-

ing of the world around them."

She adds, "Children who know how to read have access to books where there is a limitless amount of knowledge they can gain, opening doors and opportunities they wouldn't have otherwise. So it's exciting to partner with the Canadian Children's Book Centre to make sure kids get at least one book."

While the Canadian Children's Book Centre donates the books, Friesens covers the freight and logistics, ensuring the books reach the young readers.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Gr. 1 students will get a free copy of *Violet Shrink* from the Canadian Children's Book Centre through the TD Gr. 1 Book Giveaway, supported by Friesens.

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Notice of Environment Act Proposal

Manitoba Environment and Climate Change invites public comment on the following proposal:

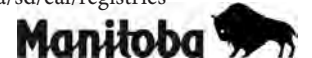
3M HEALTHCARE CANADA COMPANY LTD. – Health Products Manufacturing Facility – FILE: 2518.10

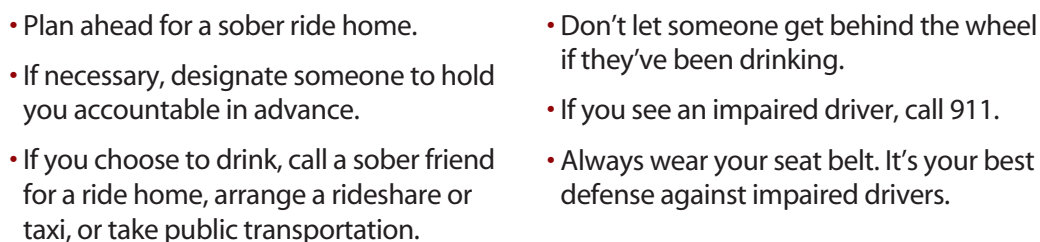
3M Healthcare Canada proposes an expansion and continued manufacturing of health care products at 400 Route 100 in SE 1/2 of 5-3-5 WPM in the City of Morden. Currently, the facility manufactures heart monitoring electrodes. The expansion involves constructing material storage and installing new manufacturing equipment to manufacture additional products. The expansion does not change or increase the facility site footprint.

Anyone likely to be affected by the proposal and who wishes to comment, should contact Eshetu Beshada, Senior Environmental Engineer in writing or by email at Eshetu.Beshada@gov.mb.ca no later than January 20, 2025. Further information is available from the Public Registry: www.gov.mb.ca/sd/eal/registries

Information submitted in response to this proposal will be available to the proponent and placed on the public registry per Section 17 of The Environment Act.

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By Ashleigh Viveiros

The creativity of City of Winkler staff is on full display at City Hall this month.

The top of the civic centre's various display cases are all dotted with gingerbread houses made by the various City departments.

It's a team-building exercise that has become quite a tradition, shares Mayor Henry Siemens.

"It's a fun thing that each one of our departments every year builds a gingerbread house and then internally the staff vote on the best one," he said, noting a winner had not yet been crowned as of last week. "It started out with one or two departments really going all out, and then the other departments wanted to get



Gingerbread creations on display at City Hall

involved as well."

Standouts this year include the entry from the Public Works Department, which paid homage to the former Winkler water tower with their "Sugar Rush" creation that includes a slide of candy from the top of the tower to the cookie treatment plant below and comes complete with cutouts of staff cracking wise.

Winkler's Utilities staffers, who oversee the community's water and wastewater infrastructure, created, fittingly, "Mtn. DooDoo," a brown mountain peopled with a host of safety vest-wearing Lego minifigs, who use a ski lift made out of tiny toilets to get to the top.

The Administrative department, meanwhile, encased their gingerbread house inside a giant snow globe, while the Planning and Engineering department



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

ment created a winter carnival scene complete with a candy cane Ferris wheel.

You can see these and the other departmental submissions at City Hall for the next few weeks.

Manitoba Farmer Wellness Program achieves charitable status

By Lana Meier

The Manitoba Farmer Wellness Program (MFWP) is thrilled to announce its recent approval for charitable status from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). This significant achievement will enable the organization to further its mission of promoting mental wellness among farm families and employees in Manitoba.

Chairperson Marcel Hacault of MFWP expresses his enthusiasm for the organization's attainment of charitable status. This advancement not only reinforces accountability, but also broadens the potential to generate funds and improve support for Manitoba's farming community. The team is eager to embrace these fresh prospects and sincerely thankful for the ongoing backing from our community.

As a result of our new status, MFWP is able to provide tax receipts for qualifying donations. This allows sponsors to support the welfare of Manitoba farmers and receive tax deductions. Additionally, it opens doors for MFWP to apply for grants and funding opportunities that require a registered charity designation.

The MFWP provides confidential counselling services to farm families and employees, with a maximum of nine sessions per year. These sessions are conducted by counsellors who have a strong understanding of the agriculture industry.

To learn more about the Manitoba Farmer Wellness Program, schedule an appointment, or contribute through a donation, kindly visit manitobafarmerwellness.ca.

The Funnies



The Voice What's *Your* story? Call 204-325-6888



What's *Your* Christmas Story?

We had A LOT of great entries this year, so we're running a few more honourable mentions this week. Enjoy!

THE NUTCRACKERS' LAST STAND

At the base of the kitchen cabinet, Commander Crunch stands in front of his nutcracker army, brandishing his sword at the legion of cookie pirates perched above them.

"ON MY COUNT, ME MATEYS!" the dreaded Captain Cookie shouts from atop the counter as he looks down upon the nutcracker army, raising his candy cane cutlass up high for his glorified crew to see.

Captain Cookie's gingerbread pirates climb high on their ship's masts, holding their cookie swords and licorice whips at the ready, loading the cannons with nerd clusters. The sugary pirates yell down taunts at the small nutcracker army down below.

Below, Commander Crunch ignores the no-so-sweet cookies and focuses on gathering his troops.

"Sergeant Smasher, Admiral Almond and Major Nutcase," Commander Crunch clacks, addressing his lieutenant nutcrackers importantly.

"I want you to inform your units of the information our spy Sir Chestnut has just told me!"

"YES SIR!" Sergeant Smasher, Admiral Almond and Major Nutcase shout together, saluting Commander Crunch and hurrying to go tell their troops the news.

"NO, COME BACK HERE!" Commander Crunch yells at them. "I HAVEN'T TOLD YOU WHAT TO SAY YET!"

"Too late," a terrified looking nutcracker private says, pointing at the menacing pirate ship on the kitchen counter.

"ARR!! ATTACK THE SCALLY-WAGS!!!" Captain Cookie shouts from above, and the front lines of his brave crew jump off the counter to attack Commander Crunch's army. But as soon as the pirates land on the floor, their legs break off and they have to hop on their bellies and do handstands to approach the nutcrackers.

"Shiver me timbers!" Captain Cookie exclaims. "Didn't think of that... well... herm... Okay! New Plan!"

He turns around to address his whole army. "ALL YE MATEYS WITH HIS FEET ON THE GROUND FOLLOW ME!"

Captain Cookie and his crew of freshly baked expendables race

across the countertop. They hop on the Christmas napkins stacked neatly by the picture of Santa eating cookies and putting presents under the tree.

"Monst-arr," Captain Cookie grumbles at the sight of Santa eating his cousins. All aboard the napkin, one of the expendable crewmen pushes it off the counter, but fails to hop on himself. Sadly, he explodes into cookie crumbs on the tile floor below.

"Shame," Captain Cookie says, making a smooth landing on the floor himself.

The war that happened next is too horrible for me to even describe, for fear of children reading this. Let's just say there was a whole lot of cookie crumbs and splintered wood.

After what felt like FOREVER for the pirates and army, a break in the fighting occurred. But not by choice...

Suddenly, both sides heard a thunk, thunk, thunk. Then, with ash cascading down from the inside of the fireplace like a waterfall, boots appeared. And from inside the fireplace, out stepped a very fat man, with a large white beard and a red suit... just like the man in the picture.

"AHH!!!!!" Captain Cookie cries. "ALL YE BUCCANEERS, RUN!!!"

What's left of the fearless gingerbread pirates scatter like

startled mice in all directions, desperately trying to hide from the scary new threat.

Meanwhile, the remaining nutcracker army wanders closer to the strange intruder. Commander Crunch watches as the jolly man unloads packages after packages of shiny boxes.

"Take heed, my comrades. He might be a courier of more enemy troops." Commander Crunch whispers to his lieutenants cautiously. They watch as the old man stands and stretches his back, looking at the empty plate where the four pirates once lay. He looks around, but then spots the army of nutcrackers.

"Why, hello there," he says softly. "Do you perhaps know where the cookies went?"

Watching the man warily, Commander Crunch points at the scene of the battle.

Continued on page 20

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Christmas Writing Contest, from Pg. 19

"Well then," he says, smiling brightly. "Were they of any nuisance for you?"

The army just stares back at him, not sure of what to do or say. They just watch as he pulls a wriggling puppy out of his bag and sets it on the floor. They hear a chorus of pirate screams and a happy dog bark.

"Well, they won't bother you anymore." And with a wink, he disappears; leaving the dumbfounded nutcracker army wondering whether the family would wonder or not where all their cookies went in just one night.

—Heidi Bergen, Gr. 8,
Plum Coulee Elementary School

HOW STAR SAVED CHRISTMAS

It was the night before Christmas, and Star was so excited for Christmas. It was his favourite time of year.

Then Star spoke up, "You guys know that Santa's not coming this year? He's sick with a nasty cold."



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



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**"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST,
AND ON EARTH PEACE AMONG THOSE
WITH WHOM HE IS PLEASED!"**

LUKE 2:14

Merry Christmas

**Wishing you a
Blessed New Year**



Then all through the house the decorations started weeping. Then Star had a great idea: "I'll deliver Christmas to the world this year!"

First he got the sleigh and reindeer from the roof. Next Star got into the sleigh. "First stop: the North Pole!"

Finally he got to Santa's workshop. he picked up the presents and off he flew. House after house. Some were easy, others were not. His bright light shone so bright he woke up a few kids, but he managed to get away before anyone saw him.

Finally, he was done. He flew home and when he got there he left the rest of the presents under the tree.

Shortly, he fell asleep. When he woke up he was happy to see the kids playing with and having fun with their toys and presents.

Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas!

—Nevaeh Slomp, Gr. 3,
J.R. Walkof School

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHRISTMAS

Mar and her older brother Elliot had been struggling to study while keeping the house clean, taking care of their ill parents, cooking and somehow earning money.

Christmas eve was approaching slowly, but unlike others, Mar and Elliot weren't concerned about buying gifts or decorating the Christmas tree. They were concerned about spending Christmas with their parents since their illness was only getting worse. They desperately wished for their parents to be healthy.

On December 23rd, Elliot told Mar, "I would do anything to save Christmas!"

Then suddenly their elf and nutcracker came to life!

Mar screamed, shocked, "AHHH!"

Elliot on the other hand calmly asked, "How are you guys moving?"

The elf replied, "That doesn't matter. I'm here to deliver a message from Santa. You guys have been chosen to help Santa deliver gifts this year because he has been getting more and more gifts to deliver throughout the years. If you help Santa deliver gifts, he will grant you any wish. So, will you help Santa?"

The siblings asked, "What about our parents?"

The nutcracker then stepped in and said, "I'll take care of them and the house."



Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!

**Wishing you the best during your
holidays and into the new year!**



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Left with no choice since they were almost out of their savings, they decided to help Santa.

Elf guided them to the sleigh outside and taught them how to fly it and how to get to the North Pole. Then he gave them the list of houses where they had to deliver the gifts.

As soon as he took it out of its bag, Elliot and Mar already knew they would have to work really hard by how long the list was. They finally got to the North Pole, grabbed the presents, and immediately headed back to their little town.

Elliot wondered, "Even though we only have to deliver presents to a little town, we have a lot of work to do. I wonder how Santa is able to deliver gifts all over the world?"

Elliot thought for a while and said, "I'll definitely ask him once I meet him!"

As soon as they got to town, the siblings started working immediately without wasting time. Even though they got tired in the process, they managed to deliver all the gifts with the help of Elf.

They got to the North Pole, excited to finally meet Santa.

"Ho, ho, ho! Thank you so much for the help Mar and Elliot. As a reward for your hard work, I'll give you anything you want for Christmas!" Santa said.

"Santa, all we want for Christmas is for our parents to be healthy so we can spend Christmas together!" the siblings said desperately.

"Okay, if that's all you guys want, I'll make sure they're ready to celebrate Christmas once you get home. It's getting late, you guys should go home."

In the blink of an eye, Mar and Elliot found themselves in their bedrooms.

"I FORGOT TO ASK SANTA!" Elliot said.

Then they headed downstairs and saw their parents. They were fully healed and beside the Christmas tree,

Continued on page 21

MERRY CHRISTMAS

As we wrap another year,
we are grateful for
the chance to share our
thanks and best wishes with you.

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Christmas Writing Contest, from Pg. 20

full of presents, ready to celebrate Christmas once again.

—Emily Zhou, Gr. 7,
Pine Ridge School

ONE CHRISTMAS EVE

One Christmas Eve everyone in the Schmidt house was getting ready for bed.

"Good night, everyone!"

"Good night!"

Everyone was happy and not angry to go to bed because Christmas was one day away! Everyone was tucked in their beds and snoring away.

Ellis saw something walking around. Probably just the dog, she thought. She got out of her bed to pet the dog, but Ellis realized something ... the dog was made of a bunch of ornaments!

I must be dreaming. Ellis pinched herself.

"OUCH!" she said, "Oh yeah, I did not fall asleep yet!"

Ellis saw the Christmas tree walking around.

Oh boy. Am I sick?

The Christmas tree smacked Ellis and said, "GO TO BED AND DON'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS YOU HEAR ME?"

"Yep."

"NOW GO TO BED!"

"Bye, ornament dog! Bye, mean Christmas tree."

"Excuse me?"

When Ellis got into her bed, she heard the Christmas decorations whispering.

"You weren't supposed to walk around, Dog. The plan was to scare everyone."

Oh well, thought Ellis. Ellis went to bed, and she soon woke up in the morning.

"Hey Mom, hey Dad! I had a great sleep!"

"Oh, I thought I saw the Christmas tree walking around. I guess I was dreaming," said Mom.

"Yeah I guess you were dreaming." And Ellis winked at the Christmas tree and said, "Well, let's open up presents."

—Ellis Schmidt, Gr. 4, Neuenberg

THE GREATEST CHRISTMAS GIFT

The star shone bright, casting a glow upon that one humble house, where the greatest re-enactment was about to take place.

The light was positioned directly upon the family's sacred nativity scene. The same as every night. Hour upon hour, until midnight, when the light faded, and the nativity scene came to life ...

"Joseph! Joseph! Is it safe to come out yet?" came a sharp whisper from within the deep shadows in the corner of the living room.

"Yes my love, it's safe," came another

er whisper, but this time from a man's voice, not a woman's.

Out of the shadows stepped two tiny figures, one very pregnant woman sitting on a donkey, and a loving young man leading the donkey for his betrothed.

"Can't this donkey go any faster? I'm about to have a baby!" the woman moaned.

"We're almost to Bethlehem, Mary. There we will find a nice warm inn for our son to be born" answered the man.

"Oh, you're so sweet, but please, could you pick up the pace a little? I think if I don't get to an inn soon I'll have to give birth roadside!" Mary pleaded as she started to breathe heavier.

"Look, there, behind those trees! There is Bethlehem, the City of David.

"Oh, look Joseph there's an inn right

there as well. Thank you Lord!" Mary said in between deep breaths.

As they entered the town of Bethlehem, a Roman guard came up to them.

"Taxes please!" demanded the Roman.

"Yes sir," replied Joseph as he handed the Roman three silver coins.

"Hmmp. Poor folk." the Roman mumbled under his breath while he turned and then, a couple seconds later, left.

"Oh, don't worry about old Petronius," came a voice from behind.

"He's just tired of being in the sun and collecting taxes that he doesn't get," said a man with laughter in his voice.

"Thanks for the encouragement sir, but my wife, Mary, is very pregnant

Continued on page 22

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TUES DEC 24	8:30AM - 2PM	TUES DEC 24	8:00AM - 2PM
WED DEC 25	CLOSED	WED DEC 25	CLOSED
THURS DEC 26	CLOSED	THURS DEC 26	CLOSED
FRI DEC 27	8:30AM - 5PM	FRI DEC 27	8:00AM - 6PM
SAT DEC 28	CLOSED	SAT DEC 28	CLOSED
MON DEC 30	8:30AM - 5PM	MON DEC 30	8:00AM - 6PM
TUES DEC 31	8:30AM - 2PM	TUES DEC 31	8:00AM - 2PM
WED JAN 1	CLOSED	WED JAN 1	CLOSED
THURS JAN 2	8:30AM - 5PM	THURS JAN 2	8:00AM - 6PM

HAPPY *holidays!*
AND
happy new year!

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DATE	CLINIC HOURS	WALK-IN HOURS
FRI DEC 20	10:00AM - 5:30PM	10:30AM - 4:30PM
MON DEC 23	8:30AM - 5:30PM	10:30AM - 4:30PM
TUE DEC 24	8:30AM - 12:00PM	9:00AM - 12:00PM
WED DEC 25	CLOSED	CLOSED
THU DEC 26	CLOSED	CLOSED
FRI DEC 27	8:30AM - 5:30PM	10:30AM - 4:30PM
MON DEC 30	8:30AM - 5:30PM	10:30AM - 4:30PM
TUE DEC 31	8:30AM - 3:00PM	10:30AM - 3:00PM
WED JAN 1	CLOSED	CLOSED
THU JAN 2	8:30AM - 5:30PM	10:30AM - 4:30PM
FRI JAN 3	8:30AM - 5:30PM	10:30AM - 4:30PM

ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS AT 8:00AM
IN-PERSON REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 8:30AM
**FRI DEC 20 ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS AT 9:30AM
**FRI DEC 20 IN-PERSON REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 10:00AM

Christmas Writing Contest, from Pg. 21

and we have no reservations for lodging. Would you mind pointing us in the direction of the inn, as this crowd has become very thick?" Joseph asked the kind man.

"Of course son! Thataway," the man said, pointing eastward.

After thank-yous and well wishes, Mary, who was now about to give birth, and Joseph, headed through the immensely thick crowd towards the inn.

Once they arrived at the inn Joseph led the donkey to a fence post and tied it there just as the innkeeper walked up yelling "We have no rooms, go away!!!"

"But sir my wife is about to give birth and..."

"We don't have rooms in the inn, only the out! Leave!" the innkeeper cut in.

"Please! I need a warm place to give birth. Please." Mary asked the innkeeper with urgency.

"Oh give the lady a room Jebediah! She's about to give birth!" the innkeepers wife yelled from inside.

"But we have no rooms ... I guess we could put them in the stable," the innkeeper said thoughtfully.

"Well, then could you lead us to your stable?" Joseph spoke impatiently.

"Yes, right this way."

Once at the stable Joseph prepared a bed of hay for Mary to lay on, and within that hour she gave birth. She wrapped the baby in swaddling clothes and lay him to sleep in a manger.

Mary thought of what the prophet Isaiah said years before: "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

"Okay, cut! Good runthrough everyone! Now back to your positions in the nativity scene before the humans wake up!"

—Aliya Fehr, Gr. 7,
Winkler

JET'S BEST CHRISTMAS

Sam's mother is the world's hardest person to shop for. Then he remembered she loved animals but never has had a pet.

There was a dog that lived in a very cold forest and he was sleeping in a log. He was eight years old and his name was Jet. He loved the snow and especially Christmas.

When he woke up he heard ringing bells, so he went to the city, The Pas. In the city he saw lots of lights and knew that it was almost Christmas. He was so excited.

Suddenly a man in a black jacket was running at him with a big cage. He was so scared and froze with fear. The man threw the cage around him and put him in his van and brought him to the pet store. Jet felt trapped and very scared.

Sam came to the pet store to look for a pet for his mom. Jet was a cute puppy and very playful. He knew his mom would love him! He used all his money on him. He was \$40.99.

When Sam got home he told his dad about what he had got for his mom. They built him a dog house and hid it in the garage storage closet.

The next day was Christmas Sunday and Sam was excited to give Jet to her.

He showed his mom where Jet was hiding in the garage. Jet was sleeping in his bed they made for him.

Sam's mom was so happy and played with him all day. Jet was so happy she loved him.

—Jude Sawatzky, Gr. 3, Winkler

CHRISTMAS EVE CHAOS

It is Christmas Eve and all the ornaments are happily hanging when everyone drifts off to sleep.

Suddenly the ornaments start to wiggle. One of the ornaments dances around the Christmas tree. I tried to catch him but out of nowhere he disappeared. So I tried to catch a different one.

"This one was a speedy one." I whisper to myself.

When I was gaining on him he started floating and popped like a bubble. I was confused at first but then I heard a loud crack at the dinner table. The ornaments got on the table and cracked my vase. I was disappointed at first. The ornaments started to stick out their tongues. It drove me crazy! I started to cry.

I saw one of the ornaments riding my bunny. Then they pulled out a liquorice whip and wrapped it around my Christmas tree and pulled it to the ground. They used my bunny to pull my Christmas tree out the door. I started to scream and kicked all the ornaments off of the Christmas tree.

Suddenly, I open my eyes and my big sister is towering over me and shaking me. "Eden, Eden! Wake Up! It's Christmas morning!"

—Eden Sukkau,
Gr. 2, Winkler

SAM'S PERFECT GIFT

Sam was playing video games when he thought, "What do I buy my mom for Christmas?"

He went downstairs. "Dad!" he yelled. "What should I buy Mom for Christmas?"

"Maybe some flowers or something. Um, yeah," Dad replied.

"Can I call Grandma to ask her?" asked Sam.

"She doesn't have a phone, but you can write her a letter."

So Sam wrote her a letter:

Dear Grandma,

I need an idea for a present for Mom. Do you have any ideas? How is your cat? Enjoy your Christmas!

Love, Sam

A few days later, Sam got a letter back from his grandma:

Dear Sam,

I think your mother would appreciate any gift from you, but when she was a child she loved getting books for Christmas. Mittens is doing great. Thank you for asking. Enjoy your Christmas too!

Love, Grandma

Then he called his Aunt Alina.

"Hi Aunt Alina."

"Hello Sam," said his aunt.

"What do you think my mom will want for Christmas," asked Sam.

"you should get her a plant pot. She likes plants, I think," replied his aunt. "Well, bye."

"Bye! Sam said. Then Sam made a list: pot, books, flowers.

These are too boring, thought Sam.

"I know what I'll give her!" Sam exclaimed. He decided he would bake her a cake. He found a recipe in a cookbook that looked simple enough:

Chocolate cake: 1/2 cup sugar, 2 cups flower, 2 eggs, 1 cup milk, 2 cups cocoa powder.

"Only half a cup sugar? That's not enough. I'll add four cups. And I don't like eggs so I won't add any. I will also add some gummy bears and gum.

On Christmas Day, Sam gave his mom the cake.

She took a small bite. "Mm, so good. I'll have to share it with Dad," said his mom.

His dad says, "No thank you. it's your present."

Sam smiled proudly and opened his presents.

—Sofia Adam, Gr. 6,
Emerado Centennial School

THE CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

Oh hello, my name is Ezra and I know many, many legends that some people used to believe.

What's that? You want to hear one of them? Okay, sure. I'll start at the beginning.

In the winter there once was a house some call the magical house. The reason why they call it the magical house is because many miracles happen there. Sometimes they still do.

I'm going to tell you the biggest and the best miracle they ever had.

Once upon a time there was a family, the Hortingtons. They were very fond

of decorations. They were all over the tree, around the fireplace, and in the kitchen. They even had thirty Christmas blowups on their lawn!!! And they had a can of glitter on the table.

One night the jar of glitter toppled over by itself—kerplunk! Suddenly the glitter from inside floated in mid-air.

It raced towards the decorations, and...plip...then suddenly...blop, the decorations sprung to life! They could talk, walk, eat, sleep, basically anything a human could do!!!

The elves on the shelves scurried about. The twelve thousand million soldiers went to go look out for any humans sleepwalking.

The angels were the bosses of all the ornaments, and they wanted to decorate the house for Christmas. They asked the soldiers and the elves on the shelves to scare off the mice that one of the angels had spotted. The mice were busy building their own house and weren't paying attention to the ornaments that had come to life. The angels were hoping they could maybe convince the mice's leader to help them decorate.

The next day the gingerbread men waited for night to come eager for their little gingerbread houses to be done and ready to live in. The presents wrapped behind loads of wrapping paper were excited to get out of their wrapped homes and see the real world again.

Meanwhile, the mice were moving a coffee table to make room for their house, which they'd been struggling with for two days. Even later, one of the angels heard one of the mice talking about moving a table before their house was no more. The angel had to warn the other angels that the mice had no idea what they were doing. When she warned the other angels, they warned all the ornaments.

They were so busy they forgot that it was sunrise and before anyone could act, the parents walked into the room in shock! Their ornaments were alive, and the house was decorated!! After the parents knew about the secret, the decorations had to tell them everything.

The next day it was up to the ornaments to ask the mice to stop taking over the house. Soon, all six angels stood up to the mice and told them what they were doing. After two hours of explaining, the mice finally agreed to help the ornaments.

The next day it was Christmas...and everybody, including the mice, were celebrating. And from that day forward the mice, the decorations, and humans lived in peace celebrating Christmas in the magical house.

—Ezra Tyler, Gr. 3,
Morden

sports&recreation



Trio of shutouts for Flyers

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Flyers were flying high on a three-game shutout win streak over the past week.

It began last Tuesday with a 3-0 blanking of the visiting Selkirk Steelers.

Liam Ernst was a wall between the posts for Winkler, making 27 saves. His teammates fired 37 the other way, scoring in each period (Kam Thomas in the first, Brody Beauchemin in the second, and Jayce Legaarden in the third).

The Flyers did the same a few nights later on the road in Portage against the Terriers. Brady Craik had a two-goal night while Beauchemin contributed a single in the 3-0 victory, which saw Ernst make 18 saves as Winkler outshot Portage 36-18.

They rounded things out with one more 3-0 win, this time against the Nighthawks in Niverville Sunday night.

Shots on goal were 24-21 for Winkler, with Ernst once again going the distance. Scoring for the Flyers was

Ethan MacTavish with one and Jayce Legaarden with two.

With that, Winkler hangs onto second place in the MGEU East Division standings with a record of 20-6-2 and 42 points. They trail the Pistons in first place by five points and are tied in points with the third-place Terriers, but have a games in hand over both of them.

The Flyers close out 2024 with two games this week, hosting the Winnipeg Freeze Tuesday night and the Pistons Friday.

After the holidays they kick off 2025 with home games against Niverville and Neepawa Jan. 5 and Jan. 7.

In other Flyers news, the team announced Friday is has signed goaltender Leif Ekblad (2005).

"We are extremely excited about the addition of Leif," said head coach and general manager Matt Melo. "Leif joins us having experience in the NAHL and the OJHL. He is an extremely big presence and will solidify our one-two punch in the net. We are excited about the untapped potential in his game."

PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Winkler's Jayce Legaarden scores the Flyers' third goal into a yawning cage during the third period last Tuesday night against the Steelers. Below: Liam Ernst stretches to make a toe save, keeping his shutout intact. Winkler won it 3-0.



Local curler part of Team MB at senior nationals

By Lorne Stelmach

A local curler returned this past week from competing in a national championship.

Lynn Sandercock was the third and vice-skip for Team Manitoba at the 2024 Everest Canadian senior curling championships held Dec. 1-7 in Moncton, New Brunswick.

The foursome was skipped by Kathy Isaac and also included second Sheila Gregory and lead Sandra Cowling.

A number of their games were close, but Team Manitoba in the end came out of the competition with an overall record of 2-7, their wins being 6-3 over Nunavut and 6-5 over Yukon.

"We didn't have huge expectations going into it. We obviously would have liked to have done a little bit better," said Sandercock back home last week. "There were two games we virtually had but we let them slip through our hands at the end ... there's another two that were close."

"And we had a rookie skip. She

hasn't really skipped in anything big like this," she added.

Regardless of the outcome, any opportunity to compete at a national level is something special, Sandercock noted. She has been to the senior nationals once before and then a couple masters level competitions.

"I never dreamed I would get to another seniors, especially considering our team is well out of seniors and well into the masters age group, so we were probably one of the oldest teams," she noted.

It was a week of very high-level curling, Sandercock shared.

"It seems to have really improved," she suggested. "I looked at the names and the faces around me, and it's people who have things like Olympic medals ... there's a lot of Canadian and world experience there."

"I was kind of in awe, looking around and seeing who I was curling with."

Sandercock is now aiming for the



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Skip Kathy Isaac, third/vice-skip Lynn Sandercock, second Sheila Gregory, and lead Sandra Cowling made up Team Manitoba at the 2024 Everest Canadian senior curling championships in New Brunswick Dec. 1-7.

next provincial masters championship set for February. Every opportunity to compete at the provincial and national levels is encouragement to keep at it, she shared.

"I've been curling my whole life," she said. "It makes you want to keep going and do better and improve on what you're doing."

Wild, Royals at top of the SEMHL standings with Aces

All three local teams post wins last week

By Ashleigh Viveiros

In South Eastern Hockey League action last weekend, the Red River, Morden, and Winkler teams all posted wins.

The Wild doubled up on the visiting Warren Mercs Saturday 4-2. Robert Guimond, TJ Matuszewski, and Geordie Keane (with two) scored while Jayden Catellier made 44 saves in net in the win.

That same night saw the Morden Bombers and the Notre Dame Hawks battle to a 5-4 OT Morden win.

The two teams traded the lead throughout, with Morden's goals coming courtesy of a hat trick from Mike Rey and a single from Jay Fehr.

In the extra period, it was Collin Shirley who got the game-winner for Morden. Aaron Brunn had a 36-save night in net.

On Sunday, the Winkler Royals defeated the Portage Islanders 3-1 thanks to goals from James Penner, Chad Unrau, and Phil Letkeman and 41 saves from netminder Matthew Thiessen. Winkler outshot Portage

48-42.

Red River (6-3-1, 13 points) and Winkler (6-3-0-1, 13 points) are in second and third, respectively, in the standings, trailing the first-place Ste. Anne

Aces (7-1) by one point. Morden is in seventh place at 4-3 and eight points.

In their final games before the holiday break, Red River hosts Carman and Morden hosts Winkler this Satur-

day.

Local SEMHL action picks up again in the new year Saturday, Jan. 4 with the Bombers hosting the Warren Mercs.

Twisters in six-game losing streak

By Ty Dilello

The Pembina Valley Twisters junior hockey club has now lost six straight games, losing both games this past weekend. The Morris-based Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League (MMJHL) team is now 3-20-1, good for last place in the league standings.

On Dec. 13, the Twisters fell at home 4-1 to the Stonewall Jets. Gage Ferguson had the Twisters' lone goal, while Maysen Mazurat stopped 30

shots in net for the loss.

A few nights later on Dec. 15, the Twisters lost 5-3 at home to the St. James Canucks. Vlad Stepic scored twice for the Twisters, while Owen Vanroebaey's had the team's other goal. Maysen Mazurat did what he could in goal, stopping 19 shots in the loss.

"We were in both games this week which is encouraging," said Twisters' head coach Braeden Beernaerts.

"Finding our structure and staying with it has been tough, but I was pleased with how he played this weekend. We just have to clean a few things up and then we'll start to get some wins soon."

The Twisters are back in action with a pair of games this week. They are at home on Dec. 20 to play the Charleswood Hawks at 8 p.m. and on the road on Dec. 22 to battle the St. Vital Victorias at 2:30 p.m.

The **Voice**

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Winkler curler qualifies for Viterra championship

By Lorne Stelmach

A Winkler curler is returning to the Viterra provincial men's curling championship in February after his foursome earned its spot at a recent qualifier in Winnipeg.

Reece Hamm is third on the team that is headed by skip Hayden Forrester and includes lead Lawson Yates and second Cyrus Brandt. They earned one of six berths that were available at the recent qualifier at the Deer Lodge curling club in Winnipeg.

Hamm will have now competed in about half a dozen provincial championships, but it is something that obviously is never taken for granted.

"It never gets old. It's always a competition everyone looks forward to because it's got all the best teams in the province ... it's not like anything else," he said.

"You're doing well if you're getting to the Manitoba provincial championship," added Hamm. "There are 32 teams that make it. It's quite a lot of teams, but Manitoba has a lot of good men's teams. I know other provincials have got smaller provincial playdowns, but Manitoba has a lot of

good curlers."

Hamm feels good about their chances to be competitive when they take to the ice for the Viterra championship co-hosted by the Portage Curling Club and Portage Regional Recreation Authority in the first week of February.

"It makes a difference having experience, knowing what you're getting yourself into," he suggested. "I know what I'm getting myself into and hopefully that can help our team."

Hamm is confident even with this being their first year together as a foursome.

"We've all known each other for awhile, played against each other lots and lots ... this is our first year together, and we've gelled together quite nicely," he said. "We're all experienced curlers. We grew up in the junior curling world together."

"We've done pretty well. We've played in a lot of the MCT Manitoba Curling Tour events," Hamm noted. "The main goal is to have a good time. Obviously, we would love to win as many games as we can, but we know there's some elite teams that are putting in lots of time and lots of



SUPPLIED PHOTO

From left: Lead Lawson Yates, second is Cyrus Brandt, third Reece Hamm, and skip Hayden Forrester will compete in the Viterra curling championships in February.

practice. We're out there to have fun and hopefully make the playoffs ... that's the goal.

"I think we're all just having fun. We're playing our positions the way that we need to ... our personalities mesh together quite well, and we make our shots and play our game, and that's what keeps getting us into the good spots."

Hamm looks forward to them con-

tinuing to play and sharpen their game now leading up to the championship.

"The next month and a half or so is going to be a lot of practicing ... just going to keep working," he said. "There's a couple of berth bonspiels in the next couple of weeks that we might still enter just so that we can get more practice ... but it feels very good to have it locked up."

Asham U18 championships in Morden Jan. 1-5

By Lorne Stelmach

Some of the best young curlers in the province will be competing in Morden in the new year.

The Morden Curling Club is set to host the Asham U18 men's and women's provincial curling championships Jan. 1-5.

It's a chance to see tomorrow's curling stars today, said event head Ron Sugden, noting how some big names have come out of this bonspiel in the past.

"You look at the curlers who would have won this event perhaps a few years ago ... it's pretty amazing three years out from U18 and curling in the pros already now."

The championship will feature eight women's teams and 10 men's teams. The women will play a round-robin and play every team, while the men will be divided into two pools.

The first draw takes place at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 1. Play will continue from Thursday, Jan. 2 through to Saturday, Jan. 4 with daily draws at

8:30 a.m., 12:15 p.m., 4 p.m., and 7:30 p.m.

The semi-finals and finals take place Sunday, Jan. 5 at 9 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

The opening ceremonies will be Jan. 2 at 6:30 p.m. with the opening rock to be thrown by Mackenzie Zacharias, who is from Altona and skipped her Manitoba rink to a gold medal at both the 2020 Canadian Junior Curling Championships and the 2020 World Junior Curling Championships.

Event passes for the week will be \$50 payable by cash only at the door. A daily pass is \$15, or \$10 for the last

draw of the day.

Sugden noted they have a number of local sponsors on board including Tim Hortons, Gardenland Co-op, Access Credit Union, and the City of Morden.

Even with the event just a few weeks away, they're still looking for some more volunteers in select areas.

"We could always use a few more timers," Sugden said. "And I've got about six on the ice crew, but we could use a few more ... but otherwise, we've got what we need to run the spiel."

He is grateful to have a lot of good volunteers who have been helping pull it all together including co-chair Ernie Epp, who chaired the Scotties in Morden earlier this year.

"We've got the experience," said Sugden. "We may have even set some attendance records for the Scotties last year, so we're hoping to do the same and then give back to the community."

For more information or if you would like to get involved, contact Sugden at 1-431-774-8045 or email regsugden@gmail.com.

Male Hawks fall to Wild, Rangers

By Lorne Stelmach

It was a rough week for the male U18 Pembina Valley Hawks.

One point from a 4-3 overtime loss to the Winnipeg Wild last Wednesday was all the Hawks could muster, as

they then went on to drop a pair of games to the Parkland Rangers Friday and Saturday.

Pembina Valley let a 3-0 first period lead get away from them against the Wild, who got the winner 3:41 into overtime.

Scoring for the Hawks were Tegan Fehr, Haiden Friesen, and Carter Unger, while Ryler Gates made 32 saves as Winnipeg held a 36-31 edge in shots on goal.

Province to use conservation officers, pay RCMP overtime to patrol border

By Patricia Barrett

Manitoba premier Wab Kinew announced he's going to deploy conservation officers (COs) to the Canada-U.S. border and pay RCMP officers overtime in order to bolster security.

The announcements came after U.S. president-elect Donald Trump threatened Canada and Mexico in late November via a social media post, saying he'll impose a 25 per cent tariff on all goods entering the U.S. on the day he takes office [Jan. 20, 2025]. Trump said the tariff is a response to what he claims is an "invasion" of drugs and illegal aliens entering America from the two countries.

Canada's federal government and provincial and territorial leaders met a few times over the past few weeks to come up with strategies to address Trump's threat, which included a show of muscle from Ontario premier Doug Ford, who doubled down on his threat to cut off energy flowing from Ontario to the U.S., and the premiers of Manitoba and Alberta announcing their plans to shore up their respective borders with additional policing resources to show the U.S. they're doing their part to strengthen security.

Kinew told media at a Christmas Cheer Board event on Dec. 6 that he'll be deploying conservation officers to the border, and last week said the government will pay overtime for federal police at the border.

Offering no further details on how many COs would work the border and what duties they'll be carrying out, Kinew said the transfer of COs would not affect other areas where they normally serve.

Conservation officers are Manitoba's third largest law enforcement agency and fall under the provincial department of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures. COs conduct checks on anglers, commercial fishers, hunters, trappers and other re-

source users, police provincial parks, take part in wildfire suppression and investigate the causes of wildfires, provide enforcement to the fishing, mining and forestry sectors, deal with human-wildlife conflict, assist at watercraft inspection stations and help with search and rescue operations in backcountry regions, among other duties.

Commercial fisher and analyst Bill Buckels said Manitoba COs are a finite resource and they could potentially be pulled from monitoring the commercial and recreational fisheries to serve along the border. But he's all for Kinew's plan to have them at the border as they're better equipped than Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) staff to work outdoors in all kinds of terrain.

"The COs will have to go where the greatest need is. We're going to need every available public service officer who is savvy with terrain out there along the border," said Buckels. "CBSA officers don't know the land as well as COs know it. The COs will likely be out in the bush or on snowmobiles or quads. We're going to need extra people searching every vehicle as though it's a police checkpoint program we see every Christmas."

Buckels said Manitoba is "sadly understaffed" when it comes to CBSA staff. Compiling and analysing data from Statistics Canada, CBSA, the Manitoba government, and the Manitoba Government and General Employees Union (MGEU), Buckels estimates that Manitoba is short 360 CBSA officers.

"The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) has only 1,208 officers in the Prairie Region, which spans Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories and which in itself can be interpreted as a 'cruel joke' when compared proportionally to the rest of Canada since, overall, CBSA



RCMP FILE PHOTO

The RCMP in Portage la Prairie seized drugs, including about 15 grams of fentanyl, and cash in October 2024.

has around 16,500 employees, including more than 8,500 frontline employees," said Buckels, who shared his concern with Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman MP James Bezan. "When we look at how that breaks down by our population of 41 million on a per province basis, we are likely not getting our money's worth here in Manitoba or, indeed, in the Prairie Region. The Prairies sadly have less than half of its fair entitlement of 3,069 employees, which means that Manitoba could be approximately 360 officers short."

Conservation officers are also in short supply, with COs moving to other provinces for higher pay and successive Manitoba governments having done little to plug the drain, he said.

"In December 2024, Progressive Conservative critic [Greg Nesbitt]

said Manitoba Conservation was understaffed, with only around 90 field officers instead of the 130 it should have," said Buckels. "Yet for the many years when the PCs held power, including in 2021, only 76 COs were left in the field, with only 15 employees at headquarters, and Manitoba was losing experienced COs to Saskatchewan where they earned more in entry level positions than the PCs were willing to pay. It's obvious that the situation hasn't changed no matter who gets elected."

In March 2023, before the NDP formed government later that year, NDP leader Wab Kinew said in a news release that his party obtained government documents showing that the number of vacant CO positions

Continued on page 27

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A job description for this position can be found online on the Bunge website: <https://obs.bunge.com/>. enter "Altona" in the field "Search by Location". Click on "Maintenance Mechanic/Millwright" to read the description. Applications should be made online with an attached resume.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Morden

CITY OF MORDEN PUBLIC NOTICE REGARDING LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN NO. 01-25 - BY-LAW NO. 02-2025 STANDPIPE PROJECT

The Council of the City of Morden has scheduled a public hearing at the Morden Civic Center at 100-195 Stephen Street in Morden, Manitoba on the 27th of January 2025 at 7:30 P.M. to present the following local improvement plan.

The purpose of this local improvement levy is to fund the Standpipe Project in the City of Morden.

The local improvement tax to be levied under this proposal is to be based on the portioned value of all assessable property in the City, which includes taxable, grant-in-lieu and otherwise exempt properties in the City of Morden, and the tax is to be based on the portioned value of all these properties. The potential taxpayers under this plan are the owners of said properties.

The total estimated cost of this local improvement is \$2,450,000.00, and it is to be funded by City of Morden borrowing at a maximum rate of 5.9% over 15 years.

The rate will be calculated as follows: Based on the calculated annual repayment amount of \$250,613.12 and the City of Morden's 2025 local improvement district preliminary assessment value of \$721,350,360.00 an estimated 0.347 mill rate will be required. Calculated on a residential property valued at \$300,000.00 (portioned value of \$135,000.00), an estimated \$46.85 local improvement tax will be levied.

The annual operating and maintenance costs associated with the proposed local improvement will be covered under the City of Morden's annual operating budget.

A written objection may be filed with the City Manager at the Civic Office located at 100-195 Stephen Street in Morden, Manitoba prior to the commencement of the hearing. At the hearing, Council will hear any potential taxpayer who wishes to make a presentation, ask questions, or register an objection to the local improvement plan.

All objections, written or verbal, must be filed prior to the adjournment of the hearing and must include the name, address and property description of the person filing the objection and the grounds of their objection.

Copies of the local improvement plan are available at the municipal office at 100-195 Stephen Street in Morden, Manitoba, R6M 1V3 and on the municipal website at: <https://www.mymorden.ca>.

Dated at the City of Morden, this 16th day of December 2024 and issued pursuant to Section 318 of The Municipal Act.

Nicole Reidle, CMMA
City Manager
City of Morden
204-822-4434

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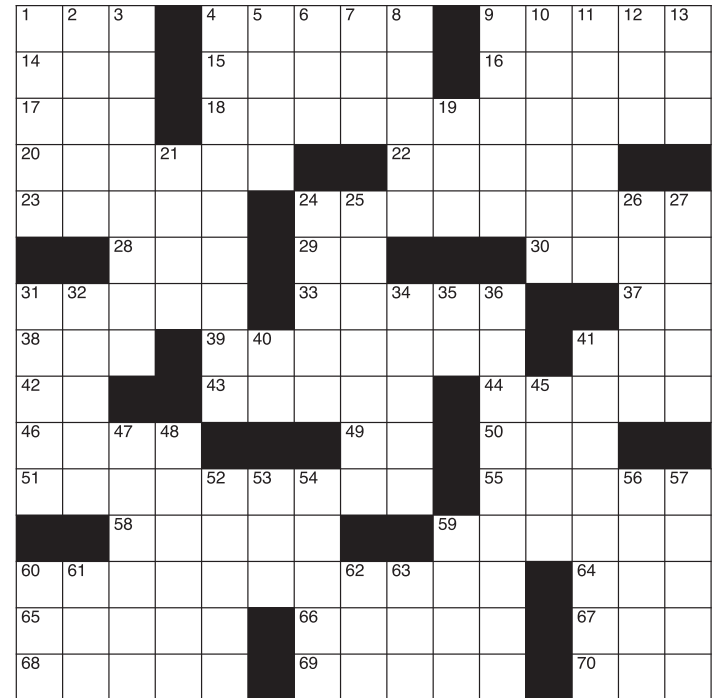
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Miller beer variety
4. Member of people inhabiting Bering Sea islands
9. Stomach
14. Investment vehicle
15. Fictional soccer coach Ted
16. Irregular in botanical parlance
17. Cease standing
18. "American Horror Story" actress
20. Grow milk teeth
22. Plant parts
23. Snow house
24. Most contemptuous
28. Note to repay
29. Old English
30. Wings
31. Financial institutions
33. Parks and Lopez are two
37. Mr. T's "The A-Team" character
38. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
39. Give off
41. Semitic alphabet letter
42. Farm state
43. Actress Sarandon
44. Back parts
46. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
49. Touchdown
50. One point north of due east
51. Refurbishes
55. Silver and Dogg are two
58. Former Tigers catcher Alex
59. Type of envelope
60. Seriously considered
64. Unhappy
65. Past (archaic)
66. Asian wild dog
67. Old English letter
68. Young domestic sheep
69. Football players need to gain them
70. Witness



CLUES DOWN

1. Dormant Peruvian volcano
2. Norwegian composer
3. Indicates location
4. Pubs
5. Unable to walk easily
6. Electronic warfare-support measures
7. World leader
8. Midsection
9. Jewish calendar month
10. Urological condition
11. A small quantity of anything
12. Mountain Time
13. Affirmative
19. Word element meaning ear
21. Carried away
24. Short-billed rails
25. Newborn child
26. Sword
27. Groups of people
31. Prickly, scrambling shrubs
32. Become less intense
34. Polishes
35. Indicates position
36. Songs sung to one's beloved
40. The 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
41. Insects
45. Israeli politician
47. Pre-digital
48. Roaming
52. Ambience
53. Brew
54. Late
56. Make ecstatically happy
57. Semitic alphabet letter
59. Blend
60. Dash
61. Self
62. Exclamation of satisfaction
63. Hill or rocky peak

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER of the Estate of MARGARETA MARTENS, late of the Town of Altona, Manitoba, Deceased.

ALL CLAIMS against the above Estate, duly verified by Statutory Declaration, must be sent to the undersigned at 504 Stanley Avenue, Winkler, Manitoba, R6W 0M3, within four (4) weeks of the date of this publication.

GBH LAW OFFICE
Solicitor for the Estate

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the ESTATE of MAEVE GWENDOLINE NEUFELD, late of Morris, Manitoba, Deceased.

All claims against the above estate, supported by Statutory Declaration, must be sent to the attention of: Courtney Scott, Acting Estates Officer, at 155 Carlton St., Suite 500, Winnipeg, MB R3C 5R9 on or before the 14th day of February, 2025.

Dated at Winnipeg, Manitoba, this 11th of December, 2024.

Keri Ranson
Acting Public Guardian
and Trustee

CAREERS



Assiniboine College
We are hiring!

Assiniboine College
1430 Victoria Ave E.
Brandon, MB R7A 2A9

Engineering Services Manager

Facilities

Full-Time, Regular

Brandon, MB

Comp #60-24/25

Salary: \$97,345.73 to \$124,221.08 annually

Classification: Excluded Grade 8

Under the direction of Director of Facilities, this position is responsible for the safe and efficient operation of the power plants and all ancillaries for Assiniboine College. The incumbent is also responsible for the supervision of power engineers, oversees all related budgets and expenditures, capital and maintenance management all while ensuring excellent client/customer service relations are maintained. This position, along with the Facility Manager and/or Operations Manager are the main points of contact for service requests. This position will at times fill in for the Director of Facilities on key projects or initiatives.

Discover full details about the position in the Job Description on our careers' website at www.assiniboine.net/careers.

How to Apply:

If you are interested in this career opportunity, please email your resume and cover letter with reference to this competition to careers@assiniboine.net. We thank all applicants for their interest; only those selected for further consideration will be contacted.

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Classifieds
Announcements

The Winkler Morden
Voice

IN MEMORIAM



Remembering Val Siemens
Gone is the face we loved so dear,
Silent is the voice we loved to hear.
Too far away for sight or speech,
But not too far for thought to reach.
Sweet to remember her who once was here
And who, though absent, is just as dear.
-Menno, Marge, Jayme and the Siemens family

Remember Your Loved Ones
with an Announcement in the

The Winkler Morden
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get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



Christmas Cranberry Punch

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"
 1 package fresh cranberries
 1 can pineapple chunks
 3-4 rosemary twigs
 6 cans lemon-lime soda, divided
 64 ounces cranberry juice
 20 ounces orange pineapple juice
 1 orange
 The night before, place four cranber-

ries, two pineapple chunks and a few rosemary sprigs in each hole of silicone muffin pan or ice tray. Cover with 1 can lemon-lime soda and freeze.

Chill remaining soda, cranberry juice and orange pineapple juice overnight.

In punch bowl, mix remaining soda, cranberry juice and orange pineapple juice. Slice orange into 5-6 slices. Add lemon-lime soda ice cubes, handful of cranberries and orange slices. Serve.



Asparagus with Cranberry Sauce

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"
 Servings: 6
 1/2 pound bacon
 1 tablespoon butter
 1 tablespoon garlic powder
 salt, to taste
 pepper, to taste
 1 bunch fresh asparagus
 1 can (14 ounces) whole cranberry sauce

1 tablespoon brown sugar
 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
 Using kitchen shears, cut bacon into pieces then fry in skillet. Drain and set aside.

In same skillet, add butter and garlic powder. Add salt and pepper, to taste. Saute asparagus then add bacon back to pan.

In saucepan over medium heat, heat cranberry sauce, brown sugar and balsamic vinegar.

Place asparagus on platter and pour sauce on top.



Savory Cheese Balls

Servings: 6-12
 2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese
 2 tablespoons caraway seeds
 1 teaspoon poppy seeds
 2 cloves garlic, minced, divided
 1/4 cup parsley, chopped
 2 teaspoons thyme leaves, chopped
 1 teaspoon rosemary, chopped
 1/4 cup dried cranberries, chopped

2 tablespoons pecans, chopped
 crackers (optional)
 fruit (optional)
 vegetables (optional)
 Cut each cream cheese block into three squares. Roll each square into ball.

In small bowl, combine caraway seeds, poppy seeds and half the garlic.

In second small bowl, combine parsley, thyme, rosemary and remaining garlic.

In third small bowl, combine cranberries and pecans.

Roll two cheese balls in seed mixture, two in herb mixture and two in cranberry mixture.

Cut each ball in half and serve with crackers, fruit or vegetables, if desired.



Oven-Roasted Sweet Potatoes and Beets

Servings: 4
 1 jar (16 ounces) Aunt Nellie's Whole Pickled Beets
 2 large sweet potatoes (about 1 pound) peeled and cubed (1/2-3/4-inch cubes)
 2-3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Ask the money lady

Dear Money Lady,
 I have just started trading in the stock market on my own (I don't have that much saved yet) and I wondered if you could give me any information about investing as new trader. Do you think I can do this myself, or should I get a bank advisor?

Mike

Sure Mike, I can give you some pointers to get started. Remember, knowledge is power!

The more you know the better!

Even if you plan to get a banker to invest for you – it is a good idea to have some idea of what is happening in the stock market and how it could affect you in the future.

The first thing I would say to get started, would be to make sure you align your personality with your investment strategy. If you've got a short attention span – you might not be good at long-term swing trades. If you plan to be a long-haul investor then just follow your strategy with or without your banker, and don't bother watching the market every day. And if you want to be a day-trader, then remember, investing is not gambling. You can't hop in and out of the market like a profit chasing junkie. The market enjoys eating up inexperienced investors every single day. To do it yourself, there's plenty of software tools out there to allow you to practice first, Mike. Not until you start making money paper trading, preferably multiple times, should you ever consider moving into a live account. You want to make sure your strategies are viable so practice them first. Of course, it won't help you with the emotional aspects of trading, so always remember your capital is everything. This goes for your banker too. Make sure you understand their strategy, rationale, and investment goals with your money, before you hire them to work with you.

Here's some other things you should know about the stock market. The 3 most popular indices for an investor to follow are the S&P 500, the Dow Jones Industrial Average, and the Nasdaq Composite. The S&P monitors the top 500



Christine Ibbotson

companies in the US, the Dow covers the top 30 largest and most influential blue-chip companies in the US and the Nasdaq covers all the stock traded on the Nasdaq stock exchange, (usually followed to see how technology stocks are doing). Another index to check out would be the Wilshire 5000. This is a total market index and includes all publicly traded companies in the US. Now if you're looking for Mid-or Small-Cap stock picks, you will want to check out the S&P Mid-Cap 400, the Russell Midcap or the Russell 2000. For bonds you want to check out the 10-year T-note Futures and also the 20-year Treasury bond futures.

You may be wondering why you should bother with these indices? Well, they provide an insight on the economy, give us indicators for new trends and most of all they show investor sentiment. They are also used as benchmark indices for some Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) and Mutual Funds (MFs) that you may want to invest in for the long term.

Take it slow. Get some books on investing and you'll get it.

Good Luck and Best Wishes,
 Money Lady

Written by Christine Ibbotson, Author, Finance Writer, National Radio Host, and on CTV News across Canada & BNN Bloomberg in the USA & Canada. Send your questions through her website at www.askthemoneylady.ca

1 red onion, sliced about 1/4-inch thick
 2 fresh rosemary sprigs, plus additional for garnish

Preheat oven to 400 F. Drain beets. Discard liquid or save for another use.

In large bowl, toss sweet potatoes, olive oil, salt, pepper and onion until coated.

Place silicone mat on baking sheet or line with aluminum foil.

Pour contents of bowl onto baking sheet in single layer. Remove rosemary from stems; sprinkle over vegetables. Bake 30 minutes until potatoes are almost tender.

Add beets to baking sheet. Return to oven 10-15 minutes, or until potatoes are fork-tender and beginning to brown. Garnish with additional rosemary, if desired.

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from Our Family to Yours

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Warmest wishes for a joyful holiday season!



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Dec 20-31

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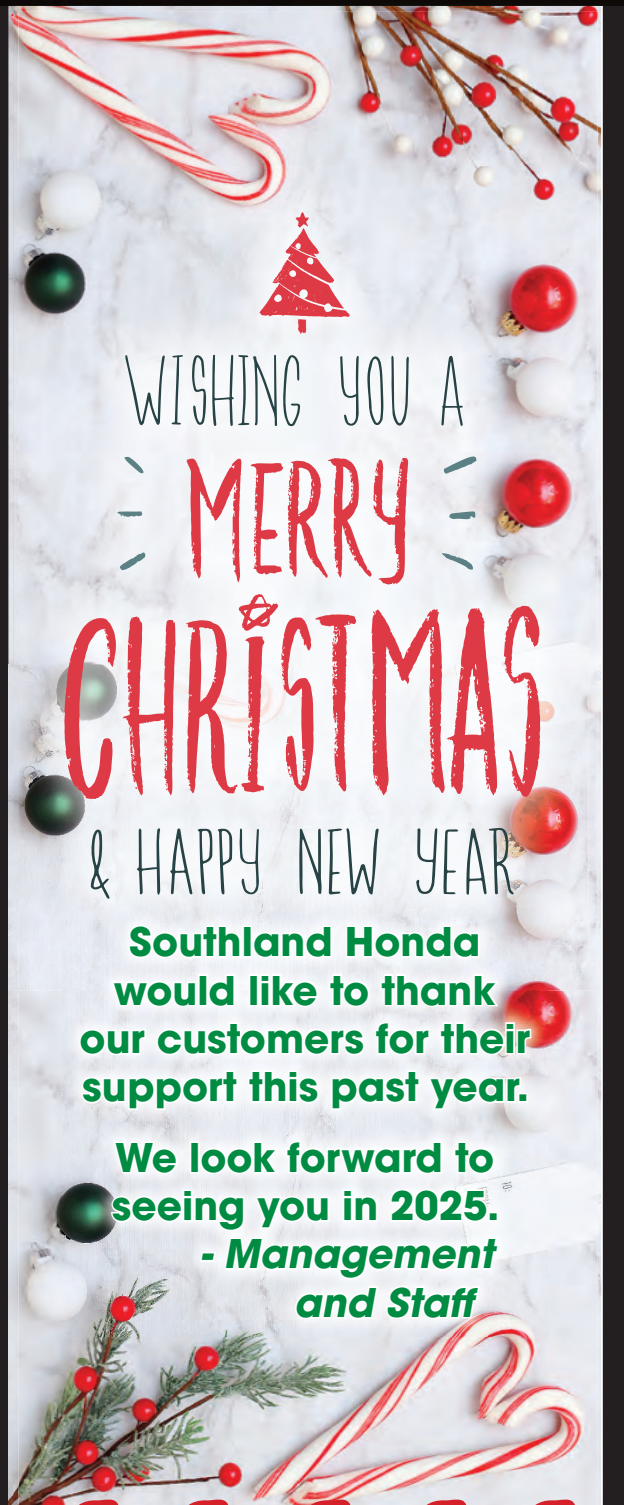
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