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THURSDAY, **DECEMBER 25, 2025**

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LOCALLY OWNED HISTORY BOOK FOR THE COMMUNITY





PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Morden Christmas Cheer Board volunteers were hard at work last week wrapping presents for the 321 care hampers that went out just in time for the holidays. For the full story, see Pg. 2.

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Morden Cheer distributes 321 care hampers

By Lorne Stelmach

The Morden Christmas Cheer Board packed and distributed 321 hampers last week.

It was down from 384 hampers in 2024—an unfortunate result of the non-profit having to scale things back after being in a deficit from the year before when they had more need but less funds to support the effort.

"The numbers are a little down because donations were down last year and this year," said board member Durwin Buchy, who was involved with the application process.

"We've included an income scale this year, which affected some of the people who were applying," he explained. "So everything was down ... everything this year is 25 per cent less across the board."

Despite that reality, it was still encouraging to see the support they were able to get from the community.

"We've had a lot of food donations this year, more than normal, and a lot of toy donations compared to last year," Buchy shared.

"I think the public has really stepped up with donations this year since it was published that we were in some financial difficulties," said Dianne Mestdagh, a board member who was also involved in the application process. "That's wonderful to see. We are so thankful."

A number of years ago, the cheer board switched to gift cards for some food items, but they do still collect non-perishables and divide them among the hampers. They also collect new unwrapped toys and books.

Otherwise, the hampers include gift cards from local businesses like Gardenland Co-op, Giant Tiger, and Pharmasave.

"The ones who applied will be getting a good hamper of food and toys, and most children will be receiving a gift bag of school supplies and art supplies as well as a toy," said Buchy, who noted they also had some extra toys set aside that recipients could come in and pick up.

Buchy said it is always encouraging to see the support from the community, including the army of volunteers who show up to help out each year. That group again included about a dozen members of the Morden Thunder hockey team, who volun-



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Thanks to the generosity of the community, Morden Cheer was able to help families in need put food on the table and presents under the tree this Christmas.

teered their time on delivery day last Wednesday.

Buchy added it is also heartening to see and hear the appreciation from the recipients.

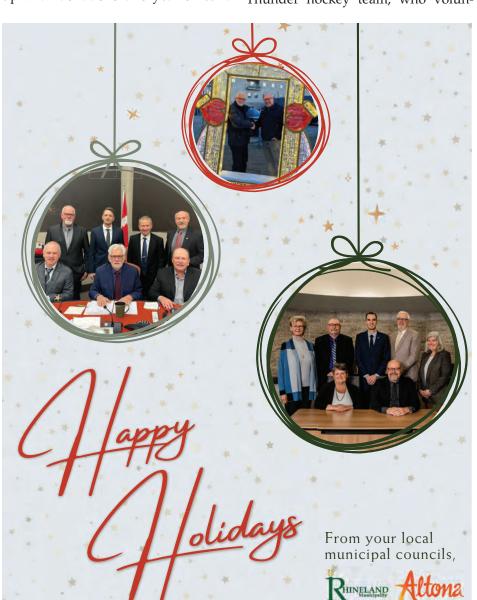
"There's a lot of people who are recent newcomers to Morden ... and they're just needing help with the high cost of everything."

"And they are so very grateful when we say that their application was approved. They really are thankful for what we do, and that is what keeps us coming back to do this year after year," said Mestdagh.

Although the hampers have been delivered, people can continue to donate to support the effort.

"We pay a lot of our bills after Christmas," Buchy said.

You can donate online at mordenchristmascheer.com.





Morris Area Foundation hands out nearly \$45K in grants

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Christmas came a little early for 18 community projects and non-profits across the region thanks to the Morris Area Foundation (MAF).

At its fourth annual awards celebration on Dec. 9, the agency distributed a total of \$44,950 in grants for the year—a new record.

"The awards celebration is a time to focus on all the great organizations in our area that develop projects, submit applications that improve life for everyone in our area," said chair Curtis Evenson, noting supporting these projects is "the reason we have a community foundation."

Evenson explained the granting committee is looking for organizations that will have an impact on a wide range of people of all ages living in Morris and the RM of Morris, including the communities of Rosenort, Lowe Farm, Sperling, and Aubigny.

"We want projects that are good to go ahead right away if we can afford to make that big a difference to them," he said. "We have a pretty big area, so we love it when we get applications from around the RM because we do get donations from all around the RM."

The foundation has come a very long way since its founding a decade ago. In its first year it gave out \$1,300. Since then, they've gifted over \$270,000 to a variety of projects and

"People have really caught on that it's a very big value to the town and the RM," Evenson said, thanking everyone who has supported the agency through the years. "Consistent giving is really what makes our foundation.'

Donations to the community foundation are invested by way of an endowment fund. A percentage of the

> "[THIS IS] THE REASON WE HAVE A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Eighteen community groups and projects received a total of \$44,950 from the Morris Area Foundation at its annual awards gala earlier this month.

interest earned is what allows MAF to issue grants. That means your original donation gives back to the community in perpetuity.

"We actually don't give away the money that you give us," Evenson explained. "It's there forever."

This year's grant total owes a great deal to MAF's past success with the annual Endow Manitoba Giving Challenge as well as a gift of \$23,000 from the former Thomas Sill Founda-

Evenson noted the 2025 Giving Challenge in November was another huge success for the agency and will impact its giving ability in the years ahead. That initiative saw \$64,000 come in from local donors, which was stretched to \$72,000 thanks to additional donations from The Winnipeg Foundation, the Province of Manitoba, Morris BigWay Foods, and Rempel Insurance Brokers.

This year's MAF grant recipients in-

- Lowe Farm Friendship Center, \$1,000 for kitchen renovations.
- Morris School, \$2,000 to help the music program purchase a bassoon.

Continued on page 7





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The Voice Sethements > VIEWPOINTS > LETTERS

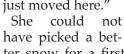
Room at the inn

ecently my wife and I were out getting some drive-thru and were shuffled off to the waiting zone. This is fine, we are happy to hang out for a bit, chat, etc. until the food arrives.

The food arrived in the hands of a woman who also delivered the big-

gest, most joyful smile I had yet to receive at take out.

"This is the very first time I have ever seen snow," she said beaming "I'm breathlessly. from India and I just moved here."



ter snow for a first-time experience. It was a perfect postcard. Big, giant, fluffy flakes falling so densely you could barely see. But not too cold, no wind. Just a beautiful snow globe kind of experience.

By Peter

Cantelon

"Welcome here!"

As we left, we were encouraged and

I love Canada. I love the life it has given me and my family. Sometimes I can lose sight of what I have. What

Then, in an unexpected moment, a pair of fresh eyes burst into your life to remind you of how amazing this place is.

Canada is the second largest nation on the planet by landmass. We are fourth in the world according to the estimated value of natural resources at \$33 trillion behind Russia, the United States, and Saudi Arabia. We are 10th in the world by Gross Domestic Product (GDP). We are 38th in the world by population.

I guess what I am saying is, not only is there room in the inn, but there's also resources to meet the need.

Simplistically, I often break things into binary categories. In this instance I would say that when it comes to sharing people often fall into one of two groups: those with a scarcity mindset (no) and those with a mindset of abundance (yes).

"I can't share, I might need what I have for myself in the future...go build your own pile." or "you're welcome to share in what I have...I believe we can work together to build more."

I would like to think I fall into the latter category. I like the idea that there is a newcomer out there passionately in love with snow (for now) because they have never experienced its magic before.

I think, that under the right management, Canada has more than enough resources and wherewithal to welcome more newcomers from all over the world to share in this same experience.

In many ways Canada is one of several warm, well-stocked inns along the road. Various newcomers pass down this road knocking from door to door (Germany, the United States, England, France, Norway, etc.) and depending on the day they are either welcomed or turned away.

I would like to think we are the inn that welcomes people rather than sending them to the stables because this is not a matter of "can't" so much as it's a matter of "won't" when we turn people away.

It's a struggle right now, to be sure. Housing infrastructure has not kept up with need and so the first to be turned away are the newcomers. Typically, in times of economic downturn newcomers, the different, etc. are scapegoated as the source of the problem.

Eventually, when we realize that that was a small part of the actual infrastructure problem, we might get to working on real solutions instead of blaming others.

In the meantime, as we ponder the holiday season we are in the midst of, rest happily in the knowledge there is a young woman in the region experiencing something magical and new about the world thanks to Canada saying yes to her query about whether there was room at the inn for her.

Letter policy

The Voice welcomes letters from readers on local matters.

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

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

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

Send your letters to us by e-mail at news@winklermordenvoice.ca.

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Wrapping elves

The Pembina Valley Humane Society shared some Christmas spirit last week as volunteers were on hand at the 500 Stephen to wrap presents in exchange for donations. The first-time effort brought in an estimated \$130, but they were optimistic that it could do even better next year. Lending a hand were volunteer Alana Hall, special events volunteer Laurie Magotiaux, fundraising committee member Joe Suderman, and humane society foster and volunteer Hudson Schoonbaert.

PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE



Contest earns local Habitat \$10 an entry

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Local Gr. 4-6 students have the chance to earn some much-needed funds for the Winkler-Morden chapter of Habitat for Humanity this winter.

Habitat for Humanity Canada has teamed up with a host of generous sponsors-including BMO, Sagen, Metrie, Stantec, BrokerLink Insurance, and Travelers—for the annual Meaning of Home contest.

Kids are invited to submit an entry between 50-300 words answering the simple question: "What does home mean to

The winning answer will receive a \$30,000 grant for their community's Habitat chapter plus an iPad for themselves and a pizza party for their class.

The runner-up will receive \$10,000 for their home chapter as well as an iPad and class pizza party.

On top of that, every single submission results in a \$10 donation towards the entrant's local Habitat for Humanity.

"We haven't had anyone win locally yet—although I do have high hopes that there will be someone—but it is a great fundraiser for us," said Christina Falk, chapter support manager for Habitat for Humanity Manitoba and a member of the Winkler-Morden chapter.

"We often make between \$700 and \$10,000 or more," she shared. "It's awesome because it's young children that are actually making a contribution to our work, just by doing

"That money goes directly towards the next house being built," Falk said. "So it's giving Gr. 4-6 kids a chance to directly affect the building of the next home in Morden-Winkler, which is pretty cool.'

There are a number of school classes whose teachers have led the charge in getting entries submitted (the contest has a teacher's portal to make it easier for educators to upload their students' work), but there are also many families who answer the call for entries each year.

Falk is available to stop by classrooms to share with students about the affordable housing work of Habitat for Humanity and the impact it has had on six families in our area in recent years (with a seventh just announced earlier this month for a home to be built in 2026).

Since its inception in 2007, the Meaning of Home contest has raised over \$3 million for Habitat projects across the country. Over 137,000 students have sent in entries.

The contest opens on Jan. 5 and runs until Feb. 20. Winners will be announced in May. More details can be found online at www.meaningofhome.ca.



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Help put "Another Brick in LeWall"

By Ashleigh Viveiros

A former Pembina Valley Hawk now playing junior hockey with the Everett Silvertips in Washington has launched a unique campaign to raise funds for mental health.

Raiden LeGall, a Morden native who goaltended for the U18 Hawks from 2021-2023, has teamed up with his goaltending coach, Starbuck-based Tim Morison, on the "Another Brick in LeWall for Mental Health Awareness" merchandise campaign featuring a custom Lego mini-figure version of LeGall in his Silvertips uniform.

They're selling T-shirts, hoodies, and stickers with the design, with proceeds being split between Camp Erin in Washington, which provides grief support for youth who have experienced the loss of a loved one, and



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Above: Tim Morison and his wife Nikki wearing the Another Brick in LeWall gear on sale in support of mental health. Above, right: Raiden LeGall with Morison and his son Mavryk and the Grinch version of the logo that started it all. Right: The logo features a mini-fig version of LeGall in his Silvertips gear.

Eden Health Care Services right here in Manitoba for its mental health programming.

In just a few weeks, they've already raised over \$11,000, with sales coming in from across both Washington and Manitoba as word spreads about the campaign.

"Neither of us expected it to go this big," LeGall said. "It's been pretty cool to see."

Mental health is something that affects the wellbeing of everybody—and you never really know what someone might be going through at any given time, LeGall observed.

"Talking about what's going on and not hiding it is so import-

ant," he said. "Keeping it to yourself will only ever make it worse.

"If we can help just one person by talking about this, that's all we set out to do."

The topic of mental health is personal as well for Morison, who shared a bit of the

back story behind this initiative.

"My wife and I, we went through a stillborn in 2022.

For me, I'd never gone through any sort of depression or anything like it before, and then obviously when it comes to Christmastime, you feel it the most, you're just kind of dwelling on things."

Last year, Morison designed a logo featuring a Lego version of The Grinch as a hockey player—a play on the fact fans were playfully calling LeGall "LeGrinch."

Continued on page 7









Cookie proceeds supports Morden **Christmas Cheer**

The Morden Christmas Cheer Board fundraising effort received a big boost last Friday with its share of the money raised by the Morden Tim Hortons through its recent holiday smile cookie campaign. A total of \$10,115 was raised, with that being split equally with Tim Hortons Foundation camps.

PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

> BRICK IN LEWALL, FROM PG. 6

"It was a teddy bear toss game where when the home team scores, everybody throws teddy bears on the ice and they donate them to different causes," Morison explained. "Raiden had a shutout game, so they couldn't throw the bears until the end of the game ... then on social media they started calling him Le Grinch."

Morison took the idea and ran with it, selling LeGrinch merchandise to raise funds for mental health. The whole thing came together rather quickly but still managed to sell a dozen or so shirts and raise a modest amount for the cause.

"It was very spur of the moment," Morison said. "But I'd always wanted to do something, just because I went through so much, battled through it,

and now I feel like I'm the strongest I've ever been. And I've helped Raiden with his own mental health when it comes to playing hockey, so we have this bond together."

The duo started thinking how they might go even bigger with it this year, and the "Another Brick in LeWall" campaign was born, playing off LeGall's nickname as a goalie and featuring partnerships with the Silvertips Booster Club and the Lego store Bricks and Minifigs South Everett, who got the green light from Lego on the new logo design.

The success of the project has floored them both. "I thought we're just going to sell a couple T-shirts," Morison said. "We're a couple hundred dollars short of \$12,000 right now. It's amazing.

"It was just two guys sitting on a golf course going, 'How do we make a difference?" he added. "It honestly blew up more than we ever thought it would."

While they're thrilled to be raising so much money for two very worthy causes, Morison echoes LeGall in stressing they also hope this will get people thinking about mental health and how it's okay to seek help with whatever you might be going through.

"My goal is just for people to talk," he said, noting the

wall design is representative of how every single person every brick—holds up the others. "It's about building a foundation, a strong foundation ... one brick at a time, one person at a time, you can make a difference and make something stronger.

Eden Foundation marketing and events manager Tyson Deceuninck said they're thrilled that LeGall and Morison wanted to support the work of Eden in this way.

"It was an incredible surprise. This is a guy who's born and raised in Morden, he's playing out of Washington now, and he's thinking of how he can help his hometown," he said. "We can't be more thankful that he's thinking of people back home who also need support. We're so happy with what they're doing with this."

Eden's half of the funds raised will go to support their subsidized counselling program, Recovery of Hope, which ensures help is accessible to everyone that needs it. Some of the funds will also go towards the agency's housing and employment support programs and to meet patient needs at the Winkler psychiatric hospital not covered by government funding.

You can purchase your Another Brick in LeWall gear online at https://my.cheddarup.com/c/another-brickin-lewall-for-mental-health-awareness/items?utm_ source=ig&utm_medium=social&utm_content=link_in_

> MORRIS AREA FOUNDATION, FROM PG. 3

- Blue Sky Opportunities Inc., \$2,000 for workstation chairs
- Valley Agricultural Society, \$5,000 to repair and extend the deck.
- Morris Area Recreation, \$2,000 towards an automatic door opener at the Davidson Memorial Pool.
- Morris School, \$1,200 for a volleyball referee stand.
- Katie Cares, \$1,000 for its Beanie baby program.
- Valley Regional Library, \$450 for mobile library awareness and an outreach banner.
- Rosenort School Parent Advisory Council, \$2,500 towards an accessible playground swing set.
- Lowe Farm School, \$4,000 for library furniture.
- Lowe Farm School Parent Teacher Association, \$5,000 towards multisport court resurfacing and expan-
- Small Town Kids Daycare Inc., \$2,800 for a storage shed.
- Rosenort School, \$2,000 to help

the R360 broadcasting program purchase a laptop to operate editing software.

- Sperling Community Centre District, \$3,000 for new adjustable basketball hoops.
- Morris Early Learning Center, \$2,500 for playground landscaping.
- Morris Wellness Center, \$4,000 for gym equipment improvements.
- Morris Multiplex, \$1,500 for accessible seating around the ice surface.
- Morris & District Centennial Museum, \$3,000 to upgrade and convert fluorescent lights to LED light-





"My door is always open"

By Lorne Stelmach

Morden-Winkler MLA Carrie Hiebert closed out 2025 with a Christmas open house last Tuesday at Bella's Castle in Morden.

Hiebert saw it as a good opportunity to not only have dialogue with local residents but also just to celebrate the communities she represents in the Manitoba Legislature.

"It's also to be here so I'm accessible to anybody who wants to stop in and just have a chat about any concerns," she said. "My door is always open ... and I'm always going to try my best if I can to meet with people or have a phone call."

Hiebert reflected briefly on the past year of representing Morden and Winkler in government.

"It's been a really good year in a lot of ways," she said. "I've had a lot of opportunity to advocate for projects and desperate needs in our communities."

She cited a number of examples ranging from supporting a transitional housing project to helping facilitate meetings with provincial cabinet ministers.

"There's been a lot of really great opportunities for me this year to really represent Morden and Winkler in a lot of ways," she said. "It makes this job really worthwhile to me because that's my goal, to advocate for

my communities here and do the best I can for our families and loved ones and our communities and our province."

Hiebert welcomed having had the opportunity to be involved in bringing forward some legislation, including Bill 228, which in part aimed to help reduce red tape for farmers, as well as the Christian Heritage Month Act.

"That's something that is really important for our area. I've gotten a lot of emails from people who really wanted it," she said. "I think it's important for us to acknowledge December as a really important part of the Christian faith."

Hiebert acknowledged she would love to have the opportunity to be on the government side of the Legislature, but serving as the Official Opposition is equally important.

"Being in Opposition, my biggest role right now is to make sure that I hold the government accountable, to make sure that they do the things that they need to do for my constituents and those constituents across the province who need to be served and represented," she said.

"We need to make sure we do better ... and there's so many areas where we're really struggling in our province.

"One of the big ones you see is the huge deficit that we have that the cur-



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Morden-Winkler MLA Carrie Hiebert chats with constituents at her Christmas open house last week.

rent NDP government has brought forward," she said. "Manitoba is getting the third highest transfer of funds from the federal government, and that should not be something that should be happening."

Hiebert wants to see the province be able to continue to grow "but we're not. We're falling behind."

And another overriding issue is affordability for Manitobans.

"We need to make sure that we have food on the table for those people who need it. Food banks are really being pushed to the limit, and we need to do more for our communities and constituents who don't have the funds to afford food for their families," she said. "We need to address that stuff, and we're not doing enough."

She also cited the need to support industry and business in the region.

"It's been a hard year for a lot of manufacturers. I'm going to keep on that ... we need more done, more government leadership on that."

Elks draw Cash is King winners





SUBMITTED PHOTOS

The Morden Elks Lodge recently made the draw in its annual Cash is King fundraising raffle. Half of the money is \$15,000 in prizes awarded to three winners while the other half is donated to local charities. "This is our 13th year of doing this raffle," noted club member Cam Fehr. "In total, we have sold over \$400,000 worth of tickets in those 13 years. We have donated over \$180,000 to various local organizations and projects ... and given back a quarter of a million in prize money." Left: Rob Dudgeon, Fehr and Shawn Olafson serve as the raffle committee and made the draw recently at the Morden Legion. The \$10,000 first prize went to Dick Fehr (show above, at right, with Fehr), while the second prize of \$3,000 went to Lois Dudgeon and the third prize of \$2,000 went to John Penner. "It is our single biggest revenue generator for the Elks organization," noted Fehr. "We're still feeling it out as to where this year's proceeds will go this year."



What's Wown Christmas Story?

We got so many entries this year we couldn't fit them all into just one edition! Here are a few more of our favourites:

THE MYSTERIOUS TRACKS

Once there was a little girl named Roxy. She had straight red hair, and bright blue eyes.

Roxy always wears the same clothes every day. She wears a pink hoodie, black pants, purple socks, and white shoes/boots with a red shirt under the hoodie.

When she went outside, she saw big cat tracks in the snow, so she went inside and grabbed a water bottle and some cooked salmon, put it in her backpack, and left the house.

She followed them until they led to a dark cave. She got out a flashlight, turned it on and then ... RAAAAR!!! A fierce white and lavender snow leopard!

Roxy jumped back and fell on some soft, green moss. She took her backpack and got out some salmon and gave it to the snow leopard.

Roxy started to approach the fierce beast. She pet the snow leopard on the head. It growled at her, then it purred up against Roxy.

As she turned to walk out of the cave she heard a little "meow." She quickly turned around and saw a tiny kitten sitting on a piece of moss in

She took off her backpack and realized she had a little bit of cooked salmon left, so she gave it to the little kitten. After that she gave it a name. She called him Spark.

After Roxy named him she hugged Spark goodbye. Spark purred.

As Roxy walked away, tears ran down her face.

— Olivia Oestreicher, Gr. 6, Winkler

THE BEST CHRISTMAS EVER

One Christmas Eve, late in the evening, Santa was busy getting all the gifts delivered because everyone went to bed early. Except me. I was still awake.

I was watching the stars when I saw Santa's bag of presents fall out of his sleigh. Santa didn't notice, though. He just drove away. After he left, I tiptoed outside so I wouldn't wake anybody up.

When I came to the bag, I bent down to pick it up and it moved away from me. I jumped back a little and it came closer to me. Then I quickly grabbed it and looked inside and found a little puppy. I took it out and then heard something behind me. I jumped around and guess who was there? Santa.

I was so startled I didn't know what to do, so I just stood there and did not move.

Santa broke the silence and said, "I see you found my bag."

At first, I didn't know what to do and then I said, "Um yes, I saw it fall out of your sleigh and came out to see it."

And Santa said, "I don't blame you I would have done the same thing.".

I was surprised. "You would have done that too?" I said."

"Yes, I would have," Santa said. "Hey, how about you come with me to deliver the rest of the gifts?"

I thought about that for a little. "Sure, but will I make it back before everyone wakes up?

"Yes, if we leave right away." Santa replied.

And then I thought of something: am I on the naughty list? Then I asked Santa, "Am I on the naughty list because I looked in your bag?"

"Not at all," Santa said back.

"How come?" I questioned him.

"Well," Santa started. "I think it's actually good that you found my bag otherwise it would have taken me a while to find it."

"What?" I said, all confused.

"Well," Santa replied, "when I noticed my bag was gone and I came to look for it and saw you there I just knew it had to be there, so I came down and found it."

"Wow, I never knew I was that much help!"

"Well, I guess you really were, but if we want to finish in time let's go."

And with that we were off. Then when we got back to my house Santa pulled from his bag the puppy and gave it to me.

Then he flew away and said, "Ho ho ho! Merry Christmas and to all a good night!"

"Merry Christmas." I said back and went inside and eagerly waited for Christmas morning.

-Adalynn Unrau, Gr. 5, Plum Coulee

WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME

Christmas is my favourite time of year. On Christmas as a family, we love to help my mom make puppy chow. Puppy chow is a square treat with powder on it. It is very good.

Every Christmas we go to my grandpa and grandma's house and open presents there. My grandpa dresses as Santa and gives out the

The last thing we do as a family is that we go to church at 9:00 and then open presents when we get back.

Next let me talk to you about our family traditions. First, we watch movies like *The Grinch*. We also set up the Christmas tree together. We play board games and card games; it is so much fun! We go skating on cold days sometimes. We always listen to Christmas music too—it's just so much fun when you listen to music!

Snow is my second favorite part about Christmas! We love to build little burrows in the snow

for little creatures. We also like snowball fights, sometimes make ice rinks in the snow with water. Cool how we get our own backdoor rink!

We build snowmen and then we act like the leader of snow, and then we have snowball fights and hide behind our snowmen.

When it is snowing, we go outside and try catching the snowflakes in our mouth. It is hard to do but it is fun!

Sometimes my dad goes outside and takes out his snowblower and starts blowing snow as us. We drink hot chocolate when we get inside.

When we are going outside, we need to dress warmly so we wear cozy boots, snow jackets, ski pants, and to layers of mittens.

The last thing I want to talk about is gifts. We get home from church and watch our mom and dad open their presents first. And then we take our stockings and we start with Gus, and then Lily, and then me. We open our stockings and look at everything and then we take our presents and open them in the same order. And then after everything has been opened, we clean up.

And that is what Christmas means to me.

—Cataleya Warms, Gr. 6, Emerado Centennial School

A SNOW GLOBE ADVENTURE

Julie walks around the snow globe and then she sees ... tons of gingerbread houses and gingerbread people.

Then she sees all the gingerbread people looking at her. Suddenly gingerbread police started chasing her.

Julie ran into the snowy forest. When she was walking in the forest Julie saw a pack of ginger wolves. The wolves started charging at her. Julie ran as fast as she could.

Suddenly, a peppermint bear came out of a cave and started attacking the pack of wolves.

Julie continued running until she saw another snow globe. Julie shook the snow globe and it transported back to her house.

- Ayden Young, Gr. 4, Morden

Continued on page 10



What's Wown Christmas Story?

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

From Pg. 9

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN TO ME?

What does Christmas mean to me? Does it mean singing along to Christmas music, holiday baking, getting presents, hot chocolate, decorating with holly, or licking candy canes?

Well, don't get me wrong, I like all those things, but what Christmas means to me is Jesus' birth. It is an amazing story about a man and woman travelling to a place called Bethlehem, no inns having room for them to stay, having to stay in a stable with animals, and a very special baby being born. A baby that would grow to be a man and be nailed to a cross and for our many sins that we commit every day. Isn't that amazing!

One of my favorite Christmas memories is reading the Christmas story in Matthew 1:18-25 and 12:1-23 (read it and you will know why!)

It also means going to the Christmas program at our church, going to our family's Christmas gatherings, playing Christmas carols on our piano, and watching Christmas movies. But Jesus' birth stands out the most to me!

Merry Christmas and a happy new year!

—Peyton Harder, Gr. 6, Reinland

THE MISSING SACK ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT

One Christmas night Santa was delivering presents from house to house when ... he crashed into a mountain!

And the sack fell into the yard and it rang the doorbell and the kid said, "I will get it."

The kid saw the sack of the presents and the kid said, "I must bring the presents to Santa, but secretly." So he set off with all of his winter gear on the night after Christmas.

The journey took until next Christmas and the little boy stopped at a couple of restaurants. He packed some energy bars and then, as fast as you can say "Santa lives at the North Pole" one hundred times fast, almost one year has passed and he passed a lot of dangers and he finally got



there and he told Santa all of his dangers.

And then he was having Christmas cookies with Santa Claus and they gave Christmas to everyone.

-Felix Wiebe, Gr. 3, Winkler

CHRISTMAS MAGIC

Julie loved Christmas more then any other time of the year. She loves wearing her bright blue Christmas sweater. She loved the lights, the smell of cookies, and Christmas carols.

Then one snowy evening, she was looking in her grandma's attic when she found a dusty and old snow globe. Inside it there was people singing and dancing.

Then she felt a quick rush of cold air surround her. When she opened her eyes, she wasn't in the attic; she was in the same place that was in the snow globe.

Everything looked amazing. The sky was sparkling and the air smelled like peppermint and marshmallows. Carollers went past singing. There were stalls of free hot chocolate and candy.

Everyone said hi to her as if they had known her for years. "Merry Christmas," they all said.

Presents filled up under the huge Christmas tree, wrapped in amazing sparkling wrapping paper. She laughed, having fun. It was perfect.

But as night came, she remembered her family back at her house. Her grandma baking cookies, her mom sitting at the fire, and her brother.

She tried enjoying the place, but the more she thought about it the more she felt empty inside. She realized she had to somehow get home. She didn't have a phone to watch YouTube or contact her parents.

Julie looked around the village to find something or someone. At the end of the town on a hill she found a tall guy in a Christmas sweater and a toque, and he was just sitting at the top of a huge hill that was towering over Julie. His face was red as he looked cold.

She began to climb the huge hill it took her a bit to get her way to the top, but she did it.

She asked the tall man, "Sir do you know how to get out of this place?

"Did you get here by a snow globe" he asked. She said yes. Then the tall man asked, "Do you want me to help you get home?"

"Yes!" Julie said.

The tall man led her to his huge workshop in the middle of town. In the workshop there was metal, glass jars, and potions.

"Were do you live" he asked.

"Winkler, Manitoba," she said.

"Okay!" the man said.

And after the longest 30 minutes of her life, it was done. She first thanked the man for all he had did for her then she said, "goodbye and thank you" right before vigorously shaking the snow globe.

Everything around her swirled around. Then she woke up in her bed.

It turns out the real Christmas gift is friends

and family.

—Desmond Cwir, Gr. 6, Winkler

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

On Christmas Eve, my two older brothers and I run giggling into the living room, eyes fixed on the Christmas tree.

Pyjama-clad, we roll out our sleeping bags under the large tree, its tip just brushing the ceiling. Crawling in, everyone calls "Good night!" to each other.

I wriggle to get comfortable and nestle deeper into my cozy, warm sleeping bag. Closing my eyes, I drift off into a land where trampolines are giant, fluffy, powdery marshmallows, slides are sweet, succulent pieces of pie, and you can jump off marshmallows into pools of hot chocolate and climb back up cinnamon stick ladders.

Drawn from sleep, I glance at the clock and discover it is a little after 1 a.m.

Settling down again and gazing up at the bright and cheery Christmas tree, covered with shiny blue balls and icicles, I am blown away on clouds of thoughts. Landing on one, I think of opening presents at the Hildebrand gathering next weekend. If it's anything like previous years, it will be chaotic but fun, with everyone trying to get the others to all pay attention to them and colourful wrapping paper littering the floor.

The Wieler Christmas gathering last Sunday was more organized, everybody waiting their turn to open one more present from their pile.

I sigh contentedly, curled up and relaxed in my snug sleeping bag, and close my eyes to float once again into Dreamland.

Waking, I thrust myself on my elbows and perceive my brothers stirring. It is now six o'clock. We slither out of our sleeping bags and sprint to our parent's bedroom. Jumping on the bed and tickling them until they retreat out of bed, my brothers and I hustle them into the spacious living room, then stand on chairs, stretching to reach our homemade stockings. We empty them of their contents and hurriedly evaluate the fantastic things inside.

Next we turn to our presents and eagerly wait our turn to open another present in our stack.

With much joy and Christmas spirit, we play with our delightful gifts, sporadically rolling with laughter when one of us does something comical.

It is a dandy Christmas, filled with laughs, love, and running around the country house in cotton pyjamas. Sipping hot chocolate, which was just like my dream, filled with marshmallows and a cinnamon stick, I shut my eyes and think about the wonderful things that happen on Christmas Day.

- Vivian Wieler, Gr. 5, Stanley

Continued on page 11

What's Wow Christmas Story?

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

From Pg. 10

THE WINTER ADVENTURE

One cold winter day a boy named Zach was outside and came in for some nice hot choco-

When he was done, he went to his snow globe and shook it. When he did, he saw a magical colourful line that swirled around him. It got faster and faster until it fully covered him. Then he randomly disappeared to a winter wonderland.

When he got there, he felt something cold. It was SNOW! Snow covered him so he dug himself out. When he did, he took off all the snow. Even though he got off all the snow he was cold.

Since he was lost he tried to find his house. He looked and looked but all he saw was trees. But then he saw a big clearing and he was so happy to see it. There were trees with rainbow candy canes with red and green decorations but no house. He was happy but sad so he made giant snowmen, big snow angels, and built a huge snow fort.

He was having fun but he wanted his home. He kept on looking for awhile. Then he saw a glow from a long ways away so he started to walk to it. When he got there the glow was high in the tree. He got it. It was just a snow globe but it showed his house.

It was very interesting for it to have his house on it plus it was a snow globe. He shook it. Then he saw another swirling line and it took him back to his house.

When he got home there was another cup of hot chocolate waiting for him by the nice warm fire. When he saw it he drank it all up. What an adventure!

> —Dallas, Gr. 2, Blumenfeld School

THE MYSTERIOUS CHRISTMAS

One night Jessica woke up. She opened her eyes. She looked at her parents' bed. She saw them for a second but then they disappeared. She looked out the door and she saw some mysterious footprints ... she grabbed her jacket and toque and mitts.

There was a note. She took it out of the envelope and read it. The note said:

Dear Iessica.

I've been spying on you. Your parents are with me. We really need help!

From: Santa

She wondered where were her parents? She needed to think. How was she supposed to find her parents before Christmas?

Suddenly, another note flew through the window. She opened the envelope. The note said, Dear Iessica.

We are in great danger. We're in the witch's haunted house and if you do not save us before Christmas we will be cooked.

From: Santa

She screamed, "Aaaaaaaah! I'm supposed to go to the witch's house! That old place next door is full of creeps."

But Jessica was very brave so she did it anyway. She got on her coat and climbed the hill. When she got to the witch's house she knocked on the door. Bang bang! The door opened. Creeeeeeeak. An ugly old woman opened the

She said, "Skidaddle."

Jessica spoke up and she said, "No!

The witch growled, "Grrrrrrrrrrr. Did you just say no to a witch?" She towed Jessica into the witch house.

In the house she saw a big pot on a fire. When she looked up she saw... HER PARENTS and Santa hanging over the pot. Suddenly she was hanging over the pot too! She was so scared she almost screamed, but she didn't.

When she looked at her parents she noticed something ... her parents and Santa were not even awake! They just hung above the pot, sleeping.

She looked in the room and saw that the witch was not even there! All she saw was an open window. And the broomstick had disappeared. Suddenly she felt kind of sleepy ...

She opened her eyes wide.

"No! I can't fall asleep! I have to save Christmas!" she yelled.

Her parents and Santa moved around but they did not wake up. She had to think. She thought and thought and thought until it came to her. She could take her knife out of her pocket and cut the rope with it.

She took it out of her pocket and tried to cut the rope but the rope was made out of ... CAN-DY. Once again she had to think. She thought and thought and thought until it came to her. And then her mind was blank. Whaaaa?

Yes, break the candy.

AND SANTA!"

She said, "I don't need a knife. I need ... MY MOUTH."

She cackled, "Mwuhahaha. Hee, hee, hee." She gobbled up those ropes. Then she gobbled up the ropes on her parents and Santa.

Suddenly the witch came back into the room. She yelled, "What do you think you're doing?" Jessica looked at the witch. She was very creeeeeeeepy. She was so scared she almost screamed, but she didn't. She trembled with

fear. Then she yelled, "SAVING MY PARENTS

Suddenly she looked at a table and she saw a magic wand. She held the wand pointing at

the witch. The witch said to Jessica, "Skidaddle and give me my wand!"

Jessica said, "No!" She pressed a button. A laser pointed at the witch.

The witch said, "Don't you think about pressing another button!"

Jessica pressed a button. Her parents and Santa flew out the window.

Then Jessica pressed one hundred buttons at the same time. The haunted house was shaking and shaking and finally it exploded. BOOM!

Her parents and Santa got up. They all said at the same time, "Huh? Why are we here? What happened?"

Suddenly Santa's sled came down. Santa said, "Merry Christmas!" and flew away.

On the way home Jessica told her parents the whole story. The next day they opened presents and in Jessica's present Santa left a note. The note said:

Dear Iessica,

Thank you for saving me and your parents. Because of that you will never be on the naughty list again!

> —Jerica Thiessen, Gr. 3





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"There's lots more potential for us."

Flyers looking to make gains in back half of the season

By Ashleigh Viveiros

They're not necessarily where they'd hoped to be at this point in the season, but Winkler Flyers head coach and general manager Matthew Melo is feeling pretty good about the back end of the campaign after the holidays.

At press time Dec. 17, the Flyers were 14-13-1-2, which gave them 31 points and the fifth-place spot in the MJHL's MGEU East Division standings.

That put them well behind the top three teams—the Niverville Nighthawks in first place with 53 points, the Steinbach Pistons in second with 47, and the Portage Terriers in third, also with 47—and just one point short of the Selkirk Steelers in fourth place.

They still had two more games to go before the holiday break—playing Steinbach Dec. 19 and the Winnipeg Blues Dec. 20.

Looking back on the first half of the 58-game schedule, Melo says it has been challenging at times as the junior team works to rebuild after losing many key players from last season.

"But I think we're still feeling pretty confident as a group that we can make the playoffs," he said. "And that if we get in, that we can win a series, that



The Winkler Flyers were chasing the Selkirk Steelers in the standings at press time just before the holidays. Winkler was in fifth place and Selkirk was in fourth—with just one point separating them. The two teams have squared off twice so far this season, back in October. The Steelers got a 3-2 edge both games. Last week's rematch between the two was cancelled due to poor road conditions.

we can gain a little bit of traction and really make some noise."

The 2024-2025 season saw the Flyers fall short of defending their championship title from the year before, getting knocked out by the Northern Manitoba Blizzard in four straight games in the semi-finals. They had finished the regular season at the top of both the division and overall league standings.

But last spring also saw them lose eight graduating players, leaving some big holes to fill in both their offensive and defensive lines.

"We had a ton of turnover, and it took some time to shape the group," Melo said, noting, however, that they've had some good runs this fall, either racking up several straight wins or suffering very close defeats.

"Up until our latest losing streak, we had gone 10 straight games getting a point," he said. "I think we're still growing as a group. There's times where it seems like we're a little bit immature in our game and then there's other times where we feel that we're building something pretty cool

"For us, it's about finding a way to even out some of those stretches where we're not so high ... I think that is for us just continuing to grow in maturity."

Win or lose, Melo is proud of his players for really stepping up and giving it their all.

"When you're a younger group, that's where it takes some time to learn and you go through some of these challenging stretches where you need guys to figure out who's going to step up. You need everybody to play a little more to what they have to offer to their strengths, to their po-

"It's guys embracing leadership and embracing their individual roles and what they need to bring for the entire group to have success.'

The East Division has proven to be a competitive one, with Niverville, Steinbach, and Portage having a lock on the top three spots by a wide mar-

But the Flyers are still very much in it, Melo said.

"I would say those top three teams have kind of separated themselves from the rest of the league, but up until this weekend, we had basically played Niverville to one-goal games in our first three meetings with them. And we've played Portage tight as well—we lost in a shootout to them twice.

"So I do think we're right there and it's a matter of minimizing the lows," Melo said. "I think there's lots more potential for us ... we can play with anybody in this league when we're playing at our very best. So it's just as a group learning how to be more consistent in playing to that identity, playing to the way that we know we need to play to have success."

The Flyers are back in action with back-to-back games against the Winnipeg Monarchs Jan. 3 and Jan. 4 in Winnipeg followed by a game in Selkirk Jan. 6.



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Female Hawks heading into new year with optimism

By Lorne Stelmach

It hasn't been a banner season so far for the female U18 Pembina Valley Hawks, but coach Matt Victor remains optimistic.

He feels the team has made good progress and that there is good potential for them to make a real push in the new year when play resumes.

"I'm quite happy with the progress that we have seen from the start to now," Victor said. "I feel like the group has followed the process and believed in it, and we're making big strides in our game.

"Ultimately, we're striving for February and March where the real season starts, and I feel like we're on an upswing, and we're quite excited for

Before a pair of games just before the holiday break, the Hawks had been in seventh place at 6-8-0-1 for 13 points, but at that point they were just one

point back of the Winnipeg Avros and Central Plains and three behind Yellowhead.

Victor is encouraged especially by the fact the team has been very competitive and had close games with the top teams in the league.

"The level of parity we're seeing in the league, it's really anyone's chance," he said. "From third place to seventh, it's a matter of a few points here and there. The top two teams are kind of separating themselves, and that's something we really expected going into the season.

"Recently, we played the Winnipeg Ice and played a great game. It was a tight 2-1 game with them," he noted. "The nice thing I see with that, and going back to our group, is that we can play with these teams, and we can beat these teams ... if we play to our identity and our tactics and our systems ... we keep pushing that with

"We haven't gotten some outcomes. We've kind of given some games away, but I think that happens with any team where you play well enough to win but you don't get the outcome," he said. "It's about the process. It's about the belief and really buying in, and I think our group is doing that now."

Looking ahead, he sees that they will have a tough stretch early in the new year with some tough teams, but he remains hopeful.

"Regardless of the outcome, I think it just keeps building us up. It helps, playing these top teams, in really nailing down the details that we need to be successful, and I think it's going to help us moving forward.

"There's always opportunity ... everybody makes the playoffs, so it's how far can you bring your group, bring in the trust and the belief that we can do it and potentially hitting

Victor highlighted positives that have stood out as well as what the team needs to work on moving ahead.

"I feel like over our last seven or eight games, our team has really played to our identity," he said. "The identity we kind of brought forward with our group is the compete, the grit and just never quit.

"With that never quit attitude, they've proven it to themselves that they can do it," he said. "I think the big thing here for us is to find that consistency. It's there, but to continue with that consistency. So that's something I really want to push for the rest of the way.

"I feel like we really need to work on our game away from the puck. I think that's going to be a big thing that we need to work on," he concluded. "It's about being in the right places, making things hard when we don't have the puck so that we can create turn-

Male U18 Hawks poised to push in second half of campaign

By Lorne Stelmach

It has been an up and down season so far for the male U18 Pembina Valley Hawks, but coach Jeff Andrews feels the team is well positioned to make a push in the second half in the new year.

Prior to three key games just before the holiday break, the Hawks had been in seventh place at 15-9-0-1 for 31 points, which had them five and six points behind Eastman and Southwest and just one point ahead of Parkland at press time last week.

"We're happy with where we are," said Andrews, who noted though having a little bit of a sour taste when the Hawks dropped a game against the Winnipeg Thrashers despite having had the lead before losing it in the

third period.

"We also kind of got bit by the injury bug there and lost some important guys, and as a result, we just couldn't hold the lead down the stretch.

"Overall though, I'm happy with our performance so far," said Andrews, who suggested they have been competitive overall aside from three games against the Winnipeg Bruins where they "kind of laid an egg" and allowed 21 goals.

"At the end of the day, the overall results thus far have been pretty positive, I would say. We're right in a place we want to be to take a real hard run at it in the second half."

Andrews highlighted what he has liked so far and where he sees the team needing to make improvements.

"For me, the real bright spot is our ability in playing five-on-five and playing hard and being a hard team to play against.

"Another bright spot would be our power play, which was sitting at first place in the league, so that's really important and something that we have prided ourselves in being good at," Andrews said. "To see those results I think is really encouraging.

"I think the biggest thing to work on would be our penalty kill. It's not where it needs to be, and we have tried a variety of different things and continue to work on that aspect of our game. It's something we need to be better at," he said. "We've just decided we're going to try to simplify and see if that yields results.

"I think another area we need to improve is our discipline, like not taking penalties. If we are going to take penalties, they need to be from preventing scoring chances and things like that."

Andrews believes the team has the potential to move up in the standings and progress further.

"Everybody ahead of us in those next three spots are all in striking distance ... so we've kind of eyeballed getting in the top four as being a big goal for our hockey team.

"We've got lots of work to do ... although I am optimistic, I don't want to be too optimistic in the sense that we still have some work to do, and we still have some things we need to take care of."



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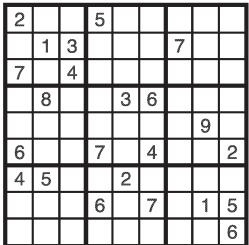
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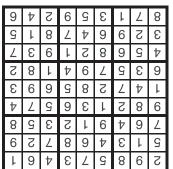


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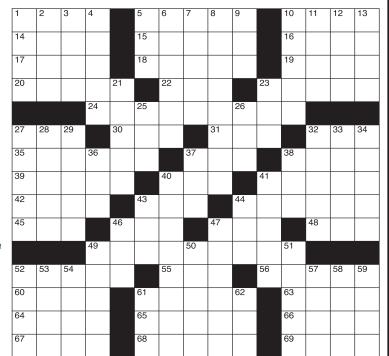
CROSSWOR

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Light cavalry
- 5. Coconut palms 10. Rounded knob
- 14. Central Japan city
- 15. Sandwiches
- 16. Shape produced by a curve
- 17. Ancient region in modern-day Svria
- 18. French modernist painter
- 19. Grandmother
- 20. Mammary gland of cattle
- 22. Rocky peak
- 23. Secret plan
- 24. Songs to one's lover
- 27. More (Spanish)
- 30 Father
- 31. Chinese principle underlying the universe
- 32. Ballplayer's accessory
- 35. Together
- 37. A person's brother or sister
- 38. Evil spirit
- 39. Monetary units
- 40. Partner to cheese
- 41. About Sun
- 42. Group of like-minded people
- 43. After B
- 44. Seaside room
- 45. Recipe measurement
- 46. Partly digested food
- 47. Flat-faced dog 48. People of southern Africa
- 49. Salts
- 52. Beard lichens
- 55. Sanders is one
- 56. Fencing sword
- 60. Ethnic group of Albania 61. Metric weight unit
- 63. Italian seaport
- 64. Longtime late night host
- 65. Extremely angry
- 66. Miami mascot
- 67. Mid-month day
- 68. Marked for omission
- 69. Body part

CLUES DOWN

1. Two-toed sloth



- 2. Fat from a pig's abdomen
- 3. Romanian city
- 4. Specifies
- 5. Rounded, glaciated valley
- 6. Spoke
- 7. Collection of sacred books
- 8. Extravagantly theatrical
- 9. Very fast airplane
- 10. Forearm bones
- 11. Ancient kingdom
- 12. Legitimate: __ fide 13. Semitransparent gemstone
- 21. Counsels
- 23. Head honcho
- 25. Cool!
- 26. Touch lightly 27. Extract money via taxation
- 28. Dves
- 29. Cloying sweetness
- 32. Sodas
- 33. Coastal village in Guam
- 34. Chemical ring

- 36. The bill in a restaurant
- 37. Car mechanics group
- 38. One-time presidential candidate Dole
- 40. Health care for the aged
- 41. Wise persons
- 43. Passage with access at one end
- 44. Make a wound
- 46. America's spies
- 47. Roof of the mouth
- 49. Plants of the lily family
- 50. Pinkish-red color
- 51. Vaccine developer
- 52. Mottled citrus fruit
- 53. A place to store garden tools
- 54. Rare goose native to Hawaii
- 57. Popular Hollywood pig
- 58. Musician Clapton
- 59. A move exposing one to danger
- 61. Historic Spanish soldier
- 62. CNN's founder

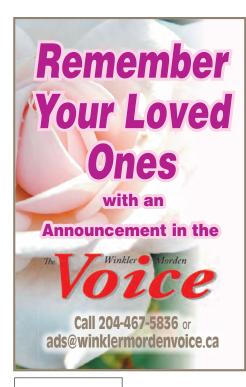
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Come celebrate Toots Enns' birthday with us Saturday, January 3, 2026 from 1-4 p.m. in her home at 246 Birchwood drive, Morden. Casual come and go. Enjoy some birthday cake, coffee, and good company. Toots would love to see you.



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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER of the ESTATE of ERNEST HENRY WIEBE, late of Morden, Manitoba, Deceased.

All claims against the above estate, supported by Statutory Declaration, must be sent to the attention of: Justin Laurin, Estates Officer, at 155 Carlton St. Suite 500, Winnipeg, MB R3C 5R9 on or before the 19th day of January, 2026.

DATED at Winnipeg, Manitoba, this 17th day of November, 2025.

JANA TAYLOR

Deputy Public Guardian and Trustee of Manitoba, Administrator



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